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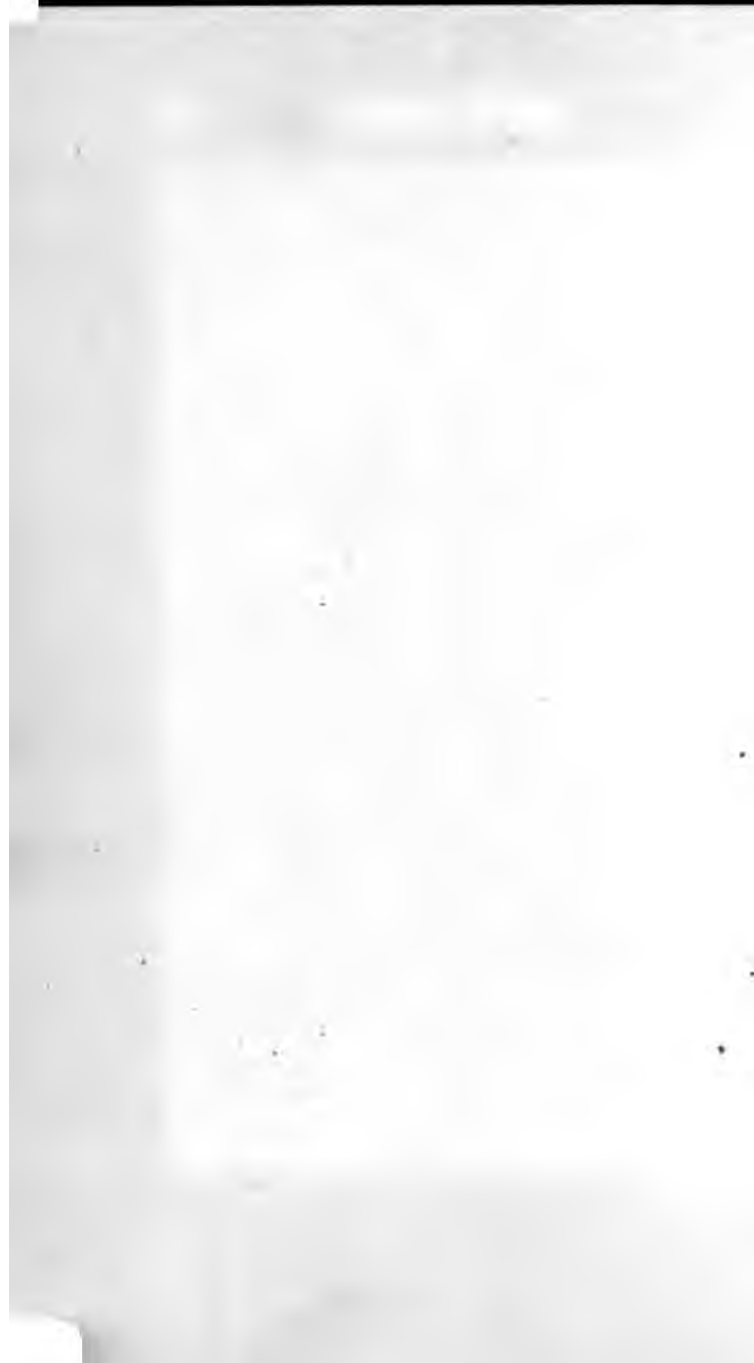


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CHARLES DELMER.

A STORY OF THE DAY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHARLES DELMER.

CHAPTER I.

THERE is no object in the world, perhaps, that attracts such universal admiration, respect, interest, and envy, as a huge country mansion,—the cradle of family, the abode of wealth, the centre of power; holding fast, in despite of time, so much that is perishing in life's greatness and glory; hoarding up renown, enshrining virtue, and stereotyping for heirs to come all that is worth preserving of the race that is. Yet if we look upon these time and man-honoured seats, and mark how very rare is that combination of circumstances which enables them to be inhabited by a happy, united, prosperous family, so as really to fill the suitable part of a genial planet

amidst humbler homesteads and habitations, we shall envy and admire the less. Even when blazing with light and overflowing with festivity, how often is it merely a kindling up of the old hall lamp and silver chandelier for temporary magnificence, for a migratory hunting fête or shooting conclave, for the splendid *cortége* of a royal reception, or for the calculated and hypocritical hospitality with which it is considered requisite to prelude an election! If the festive noise and brilliancy of such abodes say much, their more wonted solitude and silence are even more expressive. We learn from them the fate and fortune of a family, of whose fall or disruption we might otherwise be ignorant or oblivious. The peasant points to them with censure or with pity; the travelling solicitor, in his gig, tells the story to his friend as a joke, illustrative of human mutability; and the public moralist finds in them a convenient theme for any amount of eloquence. These mighty residences, all too vast for one occupant, distracted as such a grandee is with ambition and with fortune, with court and parliament, have nevertheless a tendency to come together and cohere in the same hands. A pauper noble,

man will have half a dozen, and yet be incapacitated from selling one; in consequence of those wise laws, by which our aristocracy imagines it is sustaining and perpetuating itself, whilst it in reality is but gibbeting up its skeletons by the highway for public abhorrence or derision.

At this moment five of the most princely residences in England are the property of a gentleman who made his fortune as a London shopkeeper, and who is not above spending and managing his fortune in the same sensible and unostentatious way. It is no wonder that these great seats of nobility should be emblems of their want or neglect, rather than the abodes of happiness, content, and splendour. How different from the squire's mansion, ever full and alive from Whitsuntide to Christmas—jovial, not pretentious—the necessary part and place of the family's existence—the centre of a circle not too vast to be warmed by its rays! How infinitely more rational and productive of happiness are a score of these, than the one lordly castle which often so idly displaces them!

Poyntzett was one of these noble seats, built at least all that part of it externally visible)

in the last century, for magnificence and display. The gables and windows of an old English mansion were visible from behind, recalling Plantagenet and Tudor to gardeners, grocers, and stable boys; but to the visitor or the stranger, the interminable front of Poyntztett spoke in classic Greek, and expressed its grandeur in columns, and porticoes, in flights of steps, rich entablatures, and sculptured pediments. There was a pleasure-ground before it, peopled with urns and statues, and broad gravel terraces which might have served legions of courtiers to sweep along. The classic front of Poyntztett was built and laid out a century ago by a successful statesman, who wished to rival the immortal efforts of Sully and Cecil in rural architecture as well as in politics and administration. The mansion was, however, but a secondary consideration,—merely emblematic of the first aim, that of continuing a family of eminent rank, influence, and wealth. Influence in his own time the administrative talents of the first Duke enabled him to wield; and a ducal coronet was the reward of his exertions. He possessed a fair amount of wealth, but did not amass it. Ministers of earlier reigns and

times had ample opportunities for acquiring estates and building up fortunes; but in the eighteenth century forfeitures were rare; the disgrace of a favourite or a grandee did not imply attainder; the Crown had no spoil to bestow; whilst the ruin that befell the dealers in the South Sea bubble deterred at least politicians from meddling in the new species of speculative investment.

But though eschewing stock-jobbing, and abhorring trade, there was one kind of speculation which absorbed all the pecuniary resources, as well as the moral efforts, of the Poyntz family, from its first to its last ducal representative: this was the purchase of parliamentary influence. Theirs was a county, in which other great magnates had possessions, much too vast and too considerable to be monopolized. The family began by securing at least one-half of the county representation; but England, then thick with decaying boroughs, from the circumstance of the population tending to new and more promising seats of manufacturing power, gave an ample opportunity for those who speculated in such property to secure at no exorbitant price several of these precious hamlets, which enjoyed

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the ancient privilege of returning members to the legislature. So adroitly had this been managed by the first Duke of Armington, that he was avowedly the largest borough proprietor in the kingdom ; and as such formed a nucleus, around which other borough proprietor members clustered—so as to make or unmake at his decision any ministry, according as it conciliated or repudiated the Armington alliance.

There is no name oftener made mention of in the history or the memoirs of the latter half of the century, than that of the Armington party. It formed a compact squadron of light horse, continually performing evolutions on the flanks of the great parties which divided the state ; at times separating from them, at times coalescing with them,—now snubbed at court, now courted ; its chief honoured with the Garter one year, and deprived of his Lord Lieutenancy the next. And yet, notwithstanding the prominent place in public opinion and political estimation that the Armingtons succeeded in filling, one does not find that the profit was at all equal to the renown. Their patronage was certainly great, and highly conducive to the interests of the smaller preten-

sions of their followers ; but for the ducal family itself, or its chief, there seemed to come small results from such great activity—small produce apparent for such vast machinery. Had the money sunk in burgess tenures been vested in mines or canals, what might it not have amounted to ! More than one of the Armingtons thought so, as he observed rivals of princely fortune spring up in some quarter of a century, from the mouth of a mine or the bank of a canal, to be greater than feudal monarchs ; whilst the older family, that traded in politics, merely succeeded, and by dint of labour and talent, to keep its position without retrograding.

With the close of the century the vacillation of the Armingtons gradually ceased. The chief grew alarmed, not only at the state of the continent, ranged in hostility to England, but at the spirit of manufacturing and hostile districts at home, which grew inflammable, as the sparks of Jacobinism blew over the Channel. Poyntztett was, once upon a time at least, some three miles distant from a manufacturing town, one of the oldest in the kingdom,—not sprung up yesterday, and in the first full tide of prosperity,—but for

almost a century inured to the fluctuation of fashion and demand. The good town of Shuttlefield had thus its hereditary freemen and its hereditary paupers, just as much as Poyntztett had its hereditary earls and dukes; and at the commencement of the great continental outbreak there were opinions and tendencies, and even clubs, at Shuttlefield, that might well terrify the Armingtons, and fling them headlong into the arms of Toryism.

The Duke of Armington, therefore, when a youth, settled under Mr. Pitt's wing, was even more ardent than he for "war, and no surrender," to Napoleon; and he as regularly reviewed his yeomanry corps at Poyntztett, as he gave his vote or his proxy for high Tory measures. Indeed, he forgot, in a great measure, and wandered from, the family policy and tradition, of giving their influence not to one party irrevocably, but of swelling their importance by leasing rather than giving for a permanency their political support. The Duke, however, was sincere and even fanatic in Conservatism; and he was rendered more so by private misfortunes, which continued to pour upon him after the great year of triumph and of glory, 1815.

Every one thought that this year gave a century's undisputed supremacy to Toryism, as they thought that 1830 gave as long and as firm a tenure of power to Whiggism; and yet in both cases the lapse of ten or a dozen years undermined and washed away the foundation of that power, esteemed so commanding and so solid. Mutability in all things—fortune, influence, and social position—seemed the rule, against which it was vain to strive.

It was not, however, the loss of political power that weighed heaviest on the Tory party; it was the depreciation of all in which they had vested their wealth and concentrated their interests. Bad seasons, low prices, turbulent poor, were at first sought to be counteracted by unpopular legislation. The chiefs, the Tory chiefs themselves, saw the necessity of relaxing these, the impossibility of straining them any farther: but this conviction, conveyed to their minds so forcibly by their official experience, they were unable to enforce or communicate to their followers; these they were privately obliged to trick, or to precipitate into what was unpalatable and expedient, instead of preparing or bringing them

to it by that power of persuasiveness that the chief of a party ought to wield.

The Duke of Armington complained that he was betrayed—betrayed by those whom he most trusted, and to whom he had abandoned the management of all the political power that his family possessed; and what added to his mortification was, that his eldest son was one of the supporters of that cabinet, whose main policy consisted in betrayal. Conservatism lay in a camp, surrounded by a triple line of fortification and entrenchment. These were the religious, the electoral, and the fiscal or commercial. The first of these being given up or abandoned to the liberal force in 1829, it advanced, flushed with victory, in 1830 and 1831, and carried the electoral line of bulwark; of course afterwards the fiscal and commercial could not be defended.

The Duke of Armington was indignant at this series of treacheries, the motives of which, however urgent and profound, were never sufficiently explained, and, in truth, were impossible to explain by those who perpetrated them. The ruin of the two great English parties had been occasioned by the wilful

precipitation of the one to do the other's part. The Tory chiefs achieved what they should have left to the Whigs; the Whigs undertook what peculiarly befitted the Tories; and both unnatured (*dénaturaient*) themselves, as the French express it, by the conception and execution of tasks, for which their only fitness was their hold of power, and which has ended by so severing the head from the tail, the intellect of a party from its non-intellect, that we see stupidity at last act for itself and form a party, impossible any longer to lead, or to gull, or to crush.

The Duke's eldest son endeavoured to explain to his Grace, whilst they were still on speaking terms, how necessary it was to make every concession that would add to the physical well-being, the material comfort of the working classes; and this not merely from philanthropy, but from the certainty that this would give the aristocracy allies in the people against any overweening demands of the middle class.

"Why then have given an augmentation of electoral power to the middle class at the same time?" asked the indignant noble.

"Because it was demanded at a time when

lower and middle class were united in that demand, and when it was impossible to refuse it. We opposed and regretted it," observed the Peelite Earl, "and must now make the best of what could not then have been avoided, by preventing any such combination of forces being repeated, as then broke into the stronghold of the constitution."

The old Duke, however, would not understand that the parting with wealth and rights could be the consolidation of power; or how an enemy was to be defeated by his opponent's going over to him. At last the Duke and his eldest son quarrelled outright. His Grace followed up acerbity of argument by ungenerousness of conduct. Narrowed in his circumstances, and shipwrecked in steering with a few bold men between two great parties, the young Earl was menaced with the loss of his position altogether by being excluded from Parliament.

A little money would easily overcome such obstacles. But the Duke was inexorable. He pleaded, what was too true, his embarrassed circumstances; the boroughs, in which his family had spent their money, extinguished in one schedule or the other; and property

bought to serve county influence, not giving a rent anything like what was required as interest. Free trade had helped to work these results, as well as reform and downright liberalism. The Duke was urged by his son to adopt in his private affairs, as in his public conduct, the maxim of acquiescing in "accomplished facts;" the latter advised him to steer his bark, and trim his sails, by the new breezes which had sprung up, and by the new bearings which prevailed. He advised him to sell, to lighten debts, and to manage property as a thing, alike apart from politics as from pride. But the Duke would not listen. He could not shorten the long rent-roll, even to curtail the long debt; and could not be brought to believe that adroit management, with respect to parties and popularity, was likely to do more than acres in the times that were coming. The possessor and the heir of Poyntztett, therefore, parted to meet no more. The one shut himself up in his solitary mansion, to brood over glories and politics past, whilst the son boldly embarked as an adventurer on the tide of progressive politics, confident both in their justice and their success.

Already a third generation was in the field. Whilst the old Duke brooded over evil times at Poyntztett, and his son, disgusted at parental hard-heartedness and hard-headedness, as well as at Tory stupidity and popular ingratitude, sought in foreign travel an interval of solace, vacation, and economy, *his* son, young Mr. Poyntz, had put forth the tender shoots of thought at the University, already aspiring to opinions and looking to a career of his own.

The present time must be done justice to, by admitting that it is eminently a business epoch, that idleness is not the vogue, and that pleasure is not worshipped, even at the Universities, with that stupid and exclusive enthusiasm which some years back animated youth in pursuit of dissipation. The stable has still its instances, and the gambling-table its victims; but even horses are not the Gods they used to be, nor is play considered the venial pastime of even the serious man. Other kinds of dissipation have also abated, or, if followed, are so from private impulse rather than public epidemic.

Mr. Poyntz was not undistinguished at the University. His allowance was not what

became his rank. Even he was made to feel the altered circumstances of the family. Perhaps this turned him to read and think, and to play the younger brother's part of cultivating his abilities, instead of putting forth the elder's claim to hereditary homage. Though engaged in the learning of the cloister; the future legislator could not but cast an eye towards the opening world; and his view told him that the said old world was a very dull, lazy, and unorganized one—that its race of grey beards were not Solomons—nor the reapers of mature beards more wise. Morals, virtues, genius, his observation told, were on the decline; everything was wrong; there was need of regeneration, and this was the task of the young. Instead, therefore, as in the good old times, of taking his moral creed from his companions, his religious one from his tutor and mother, and his political one from the hereditary leaning and connexion of his house, Mr. Poyntz made all three for himself. And whether he erred or not, certainly this charging his mind with that independent task gave to it a vigour, a self-confidence, and an originality, which nature alone would not have communicated to it. His father had not

a little aided this result, by abandoning the care of Mr. Poyntz altogether to himself.

The youth was now expected at Poyntztetts, where there were to be great doings on his coming of age. The Duke put hopes in the rising generation to correct and redeem the sins of the risen one; and he looked forward with pleasure to the moulding of the political mind of his grandson in the good old shape, which had made even mediocrity pass current as genius, in the persons of Liverpool and Castlereagh.

Mr. Poyntz, when he came, answered every expectation formed of the heir of the family. He was handsome, well-formed, agile, intellectual, with all those qualities of fine appearance very generally possessed by many of the English aristocracy. His demeanour to his grandsire was reverential; his worship of the old mansion, and of all the old things, bordering upon idolatry; his respect for the old servants more than condescending.

A young heir was expected to be *nonchalant*: but Mr. Poyntz was active and inquisitive, with interest for everything. Nothing connected with land, family, the farms, the farmer, the field and the furrow, were in-

different ; general information even did not satisfy him, without facts and figures. There was, however, one complaint, viz., that he got everything from every one, in the way of fact, opinion, and information, and gave nothing in return, leaving his interlocutor utterly in the dark as to his ideas, feelings, or convictions.

Mr. Poyntz's position and ideas were, in truth, not easy to explain. He loved his father,—admired his talents,—appreciated the wisdom and the rectitude of the motives of his conduct, which had placed him at variance with the Duke of Armington. But he saw, also, that the policy, however conducive for the good of the country, was ruin to the man. For it had not merely made him quarrel with his father, but separated him from the great party in which he might have taken a prominent position.

Had Mr. Poyntz to choose between the principles of his father and his grandfather, on the ground of their intrinsic wisdom and justice, he would not have hesitated a moment. But, in the world, a public man must think with a crowd, and there was a crowd with his grandsire, whereas with his sire there was

but a small and confined coterie. Mr. Poyntz, therefore, saw the extensive danger, nay, the impossibility of a Tory leader or grandee's separating himself from the ignorance of his party. That ignorance was, after all, what made its peculiar strength. It was to be managed and humoured, not affronted. And Mr. Poyntz found it as necessary, and deemed it as excusable to humour it in the Duke of Armington, as in the humblest or crassest yeoman, of whom he might demand a vote.

Long, intricate, and secret, were the conversations between the Duke of Armington and his grandson.

"I do sincerely thank your father, Fred, at least for this," said the Duke, "that he has left you so unbiassed, to come and listen to experience, and to be the recipient of affection, neither of which he himself prized much."

"Don't let us speak of my father yet," said Mr. Poyntz.

"How is it possible to avoid speaking of him, when we are met to consider how you, in the career that opens to you, can best take counsel for the maintenance of an illustrious house and name, which he seems to have for-

gotten, and which is in danger of being washed away by the tide of new events and modern fortunes ? ”

“ I am in hopes that you exaggerate,” said Mr. Poyntz. “ Aristocracy is a natural growth in all societies, and will continue to exist in despite of popular envy or injustice.”

“ A natural growth, like the forest, which the axe of man may cut down. And every year that axe is plied with more vigour. Our habits forbid us to make money, whilst the means of making wealth are amply supplied to another class. We once had political privileges assigned to us by way of recompense ; now they are taken away. How are we to maintain our position ? ”

“ It is understood, that wealth does not remain long amassed in such a country as this, without being absorbed somehow or another by the aristocracy, either by means of ennobling the possessor, or by the marriage of the female line.”

“ To lay down a theory of how the old families are to be replaced is little consolatory, Poyntz,” said the Duke. “ Marriage, indeed, is a means ; and it is the only one. For politics have ceased to be a source of gain.”

"There is economy," said Mr. Poyntz. "The way in which the moneyed amass money, is not denied to the landed."

"When the moneyed class is taught the science of augmenting the heap, and the landed taught only the science of getting rid of it, there can be no such thing. I have been no spendthrift, yet I have always wanted. And in my wants, I recurred to the Workworths, a worthy and wealthy family of Shuttlefield, who are the chief mortgagees of our landed property, and to whom, or to whose present representative, goes the better part of my income. These same yearly sums, to me were yearly deficits, to them were yearly gains, till we changed places, all but in station and name."

Mr. Poyntz sighed.

"More than changed places," said the Duke; "for in these latter years the fortune of the Workworths, like so many others, has assumed such an ascendant and miraculous career, that they far surpass any of the aristocracy in wealth."

"Then, according to my theory, Her Majesty will present the head of the house of Workworth with the peerage; and his son

and himself will be more Tory than the Duke of Armington. The conventicle, if they have frequented it, will be forsaken for the parish church. Not an hundred pounds of their property will be left in mills and movables, and their agent will not collect a penny for their coffers, that has not been brought in from the land by the horny hand of the farmer."

"And whilst the existing Duke of Armington is governor of a West India island, a Workworth becomes Earl of Poyntztett."

"You would not have me engage in trade?" said Mr. Poyntz.

"No, Fred. For a bad trader you would make, if you did. Money making is an art, learned in the lowest ranks of life, by the struggle of escaping its necessities. It is even more easy, I believe, for those of the lower rank to acquire the talents and ideas of the higher, than for the higher to descend and practise the arts of the lower. All we can do is to wait. Nature and justice recompensed us for the prohibition to be industrious, by augmenting the value of that which we exclusively possessed, the supply of food to the population, and prices rose but in proportion to the wants and means of the community;

and if that price acted as a check on manufacturing production and population, it was nature and providence still that willed it so, and that established the salutary check against a fearful moral evil. All this has been stricken away. And Peel has issued the final edict, that England shall cease to have a feudal and a landed aristocracy, and that henceforth it is to be a monied and commercial one."

"And your Grace thinks that such a movement can be arrested?"

"In your time it may, if not in mine. The hurricane must spend its fury; but when the calm returns, and the ground is strewn with wrecks, then may come fear, remorse, reaction; and the nobility and gentry of England may recover, by firmness and by union, what has been lost by treachery and time-serving. Devote yourself to that task, Poyntz, and you will win your family's resuscitation—your own renown."

Young Mr. Poyntz was far from sharing the enthusiasm of his grandsire, respecting what appeared to him a merely material question. He had raved, with young friends at the University, of the possibility of bringing back England to its old state of dependent and graduated classes, governed by respect, and

coercion, and authority, and by the strong hand, if required. Those old and infant states of society, in which reason had not developed itself, and where imagination alone was active to inspire admiration or terror—those epochs of mental slavery and material rudeness, had charms for some young philosophers, who preferred them to the freedom and turbulence, the arrogant prosperity and the unexampled destitution of the present age, to the boldness of idea, and but too general decline and disavowal of all those principles, which had hitherto kept the world in quiet and respect. From this fearful spectacle the Young Englishers saw no escape but in recoil—in a retreat effected to the position of centuries back. Nor did they take into consideration the impossibility of compressing the multitudinous power, population, and ideas, of the present century, into the circumscribed sphere of law and belief, existing in times past. The young plumage of the University ideas was, however, already considerably ruffled by the hard and rude ones of the world. And he had just an inkling that his grandfather might be right, in considering, that if the aristocracy did not preserve the preponderance

of revenue, they would not long be able to preserve preponderance in anything else. He therefore chimed in sufficiently with the enthusiasm of the aged Duke, to fill the latter with presentiments of delight. Mr. Poyntz's docility and intelligence were a ray of sunshine amidst the gloom of his old days.

CHAPTER II.

THE coming of age of the future heir of Poyntztett,—the new life that it awakened in the old Duke and the old mansion,—the festivities that might be expected,—and the best way of adding to their *éclat* by popular adhesion, or visiting them with the fervour of popular reprobation,—were subjects, of course, discussed in Shuttlefield. A century previous there would have been complete unanimity of interest and feeling. There was now nothing but diversity of sentiment; and the municipal council could come to no decision as to complimenting the old lord of the district, or abstaining from any notice of his *fête*.

Although public writers are accustomed to adduce the middle class as united and compact, and homogeneous in its feelings and its

likings, there can be no two sections of society more distinct than the middle class, which lives on and by the opulence of the aristocracy, as an insect may on a green leaf; and the middle class, which lives on the universe at large, maintained by the great public of the world, as well as of England, and which gleans its wealth from the frugal earner, more than from the lavish owners of either land or capital. The great revolution, which has taken place in England, is in fact the outnumbering of the old and dependent middle class by the new and independent.

The great strength of the Tory party in England does not, after all, lie, as is supposed, in the actual agriculturists,—the farmers and their servants; the one being few, the other of no public opinion or weight. The strength of the Tories lies in that section of the middle class, which lives on the aristocracy, which have been in the habit of making rapid fortunes in each generation, by the prodigal and reckless habits of the rich aristocracy, and which would feel themselves disinherited and impoverished, and, in truth, do feel themselves so, whenever this aristocracy is distressed, and the spending class crippled. The tradesmen,

who supply the homes of the rich ; the butcher, who makes two hundred per cent. upon his meat ; the wine merchant, who makes a thousand per cent. upon his wine ; the credit giver and the usury taker ; the professional men of all grades ; the clergyman, the lawyer, the physician,—all these, who have hitherto been rich, in proportion as their clients and patients were rich,—they uphold an aristocracy, and all that belongs to or follows one, loving both the thing and the word, with the love of the jackal for the lion. They may call themselves Whigs here and there, and put on certain rags of liberalism,—but the whole class is for upholding the aristocracy, and that large inequality of social condition, which the humbler ranks of French abhor and will not suffer, whilst the humbler ranks of English prize it, as offering the best chance to the industrious of profit and advancement.

Shuttlefield was perhaps one of the first places in which the new middle class was developed ; there manufactures were established, which gained, by supplying the wants of the many and the poor, instead of those of the few and the rich. Yet, as long as Parliament was a great monopoly shop,

the liberalism of Shuttlefield dared not too openly show itself. Manufacture was then so afraid of foreign competition, so obnoxious to domestic exaction, that industry and the industrious felt it long advisable to keep a civil tongue in their heads, and loyal demonstrations in their mouths. But this very oppression fostered and reared disaffection ; and when the freedom of all kinds, which has so largely and so happily developed itself in our times, was fully felt at Shuttlefield, it produced an overgrowth of political ideas and opinions, rivaling the diversity and oddness of religious ones in penultimate times.

Below the two sections of the middle class, which have been described, lay the operatives, also in numerous sections and layers,—the skilled and the unskilled,—the prosperous handicraftsmen of a new industry, and the famished and reduced hands of an industry that had died out or been replaced. The unprosperous and the indigent predominated in Shuttlefield. The poor and struggling in general have rather more gratitude and liking for the old dependent and Tory middle class, than for the new middle class, who, as manufacturers, reduce unskilled labour to the

very maximum of work and minimum of remuneration. So much was this the case, that had the Duke of Armington been a popular personage, or had the state of his fortune, and his temper allowed him to cultivate the arts of popularity, it is probable that he and his friends might have successfully combated the levelling and invidious spirit, which the blank prospect of eternal penury in an intelligent class, naturally and justly produces. But the Duke had no idea that the affections of the people could be won by other means than gaudy splendour, roast beef, and crown pieces.

Those who have driven out of Sheffield westward,—and who has not done so?—must remember the contrast between the dense, dirty, pent-up mass of habitations and of human life, and the almost primeval forest which is preserved and walled off to the very verge of the town. 'Thus the *feræ naturæ*, which are the legal property of the Duke of Rutland, are literally within a stone's throw of the thousands of the artizans of Sheffield, who cannot even stretch their limbs on the greensward, or sink to a midsummer slumber amongst its fern. It is easy to conceive

the love of such a population for the owner of such a preserve. Some of the hills which composed the domain of Poyntztett came down into Shuttlefield with an equal air of churlish exclusion ; and there were yearly attempts, some successful, some not so, to shut up old paths. Then, whilst the town was precluded from extending in the most convenient direction, it was charged enormous ground-rent where it was allowed to extend ; and even here the leases were so short and precarious, as to defy the study of comfort, economy, or health in habitations. There were scores, too, of abuses that neither reform act, nor new poor-law, nor municipal law had remedied, and which gave birth to a quantity of local radicalism, incidental to every such agglomeration of the working classes.

Young Mr. Poyntz had a sincere desire to revive popularity for his family at Shuttlefield. Nothing, he saw, could be done without a reconciliation between the upper classes and the industrious ones. The Duke declared angrily, that this was the starting-post of his father, Lord Poyntz's, errors.

"There is a difference," said Mr. Poyntz, "between conciliating an enemy by flinging

him your purse, or by merely making him a bow."

The Duke of Armington had summoned some valorous counsellors to his aid; the Bishop of Stromboli was one of them; and he was highly pleased with the sentiments of the rising generation. The Bishop, however iracund himself, had done his utmost to prevent first, and then soften the great difference between the Duke of Armington and his son. He had been a *protégé* of the Poyntz family, which had not promoted him to the mitre. A liberal minister had repaired this oblivion of the Tories; but their promotion of him was a thing that the Bishop of Stromboli never forgave the liberals, for he pursued them, one and all, with an inveteracy quite fiendish. It was, perhaps, that his promotion was purchased on his part by a momentary condescension or dereliction of principle, which remained a burning spot upon his memory; and he accordingly avenged his own sin in what he considered a Christian spirit on those who had tempted, or enabled him to commit it. Bishop Stromboli had a plan for regenerating mankind by abrogating the use of reason, which he hoped to effect by a judicious application

of external objects of adoration to the senses. He expounded his theory to the Duke, who had not been able to comprehend it,"but who admitted the waywardness and blindness of the age. Strange, however, the prelate who was for forbidding logic to others, made a most extravagant abuse of it himself.

With Stromboli came a sleek-headed old gentleman, with a downward carriage, and an upward look, and who, though an out-and-out Tory of the oldest school, had, like Stromboli, never been put into high office by his friends, but owed that distinction to the Whigs. The Whigs have, in general, the happiest knack for advancing their worst enemies, and into the very positions where their enmity can be most damaging. They had done so by Mr. Wherry; and for no reason, but that George the Fourth thought him serviceable, gave him high office. The Right Honourable Wherry made good use of his time, which he knew was short, but a use, we must say, most unusual with English statesmen; he allied with a mighty stock-jobber, and made his fortune in a month or two. He then threw off his semi-liberalism, and shone a most independent Tory ever since.

With Bishop Stromboli and Mr. Wherry,

came the bottle-nosed Bumbledom of Shuttlefield, chiefly represented by the still Worshipful Mr. Omichund, ex-mayor, and ex-corporator, for he was once almost the sole concentrated corporation of Shuttlefield. He still, indeed, remained the oak of the old Tory municipality ; stretching his roots in the shape of old freemen, old beadles, pensioners, and favoured tradesmen, amidst the civic soil of the Shuttlefield population, whilst his branches extended as proudly aloft, he being the frequent guest at Poyntztett, and cherished by all the magnates of the party, when an electioneering or political stir was at hand.

There was not a Whig in all Shuttlefield, very strange to relate. There were ultra Tories, and Liberal Tories, and Radicals, and Tory Radicals. There were Chartists, and even Communists ; but not a Whig. The Whigs had given Shuttlefield municipal freedom, had stricken fetters off of its different sects, had widened the old electoral body ; had done, in fact, more for Shuttlefield, than whole centuries of past politicians. And yet the Whigs were detested, ignored, and forgotten in Shuttlefield. As to Whig principles, real Whig principles, no doubt hundreds entertained them.

There never was a sensible man in normal times who ever entertained any other—but no one would call himself a Whig. One would think the word meant *mad dog* in Shuttlefield, as indeed it does in Ireland.

The active Mayor, Sir Jonathon Jukes, for example, was a very good Whig; but he could not own to such a thing. There had been a terrible hullabaloo made about the Poor-Law in Shuttlefield. Some clauses had, moreover, sorely injured, or been said to injure the town. The Tories exaggerated the cry; the Radicals repeated and illustrated it; the Chartist trumpeted it. A black sheep was as popular as a Whig in Shuttlefield, and so the amiable Sir Jonathan Jukes called himself a Liberal Conservative. But he would have suffered himself to be burnt at the stake, rather than define what he meant by the words. The fact was, he was for maintaining everything—even privileges for State Church, and Aristocracy—that could safely be maintained, and for gracefully abandoning what was not wise to keep. Sir Jonathan Jukes was not unpopular with the artizan, for he was yielding. He was one of those who would have sabred them at Peterloo in the good

old times, but who now would give them an Eleven Hours' Bill by way of compromise. The name of Liberal-Conservative meant, that he was as aristocratic as he durst be, and as democratic as he was compelled to be.

Sir Jonathan would not refuse his brother councilman Omichund to propose, that the town council should pay its respects by deputation at Poyntztett, on the day of the young heir coming of age. The Mayor certainly excused himself by saying, it was a compliment less to the Duke than to the family, the younger member of which was come of age. Mr. Omichund seconded the motion, and dilated on the virtues of the family, which always had stood in the political fore-ground, being as industrious in their noble calling, as the humble weavers and spinners of Shuttlefield in theirs. This called forth the bile of Mr. Pevensey, who exclaimed against the meanness of jobbing and place-hunting. He said, it was absurd to renew at the present day the old feudal homage of citizen to lord. They were distinct classes; and if the Duke of Armington did own a great part of the soil and ground-rents of Shuttlefield, it was the greater shame and disgrace. The noble family had fattened on

the industry of the townsfolk ; and in exchange had merely acted as obstructors to the development of the population, of their comfort and wealth.

Omichund here caught Pevensey upon the hip, rising as he sate down, and declared in an emphatic snuffle, that it was the first time he had heard the rights of property called in question in the town-council of Shuttlefield. This supposed impugning of the rights of property called up Sir Jonathan, who, Liberal as he was, took care to assert his conservatism in the matter of property, and professed to be shocked by such doctrines. Mr. Pevensey was scarcely allowed to defend himself. He questioned no man's right to property, unless political influence was included as a part of property, and that he objected to giving. Such industrious communities as Shuttlefield had their own natural aristocracy, that of capital, which had no need to bow down, as a court lacquey, to any other : and he finished by characterizing the act of the town councillors proceeding to Poyntztett to pay even the semblance of homage, as an absurdity and an anachronism.

Mr. Omichund held, that a capitalist aris-

ocracy was as useful to the county as a landed one; and it was the interest of the people to play one against the other.

This strange, but not shallow reflection, was loudly applauded and chuckled over by one of the council, who never said anything, not having the gift of speech, but who used, however, to make up for it by brooding in silence over such theories, which he had taken, at first from Owen, and improved from Fourier; for Shuttlefield, in her antiquity, was rich in all kinds of political statesmanship. But, notwithstanding the hilarity of Mr. Omichund, and the strenuous desire of Sir Jonathan, impelled by Lady Jukes, to have civic homage paid to the Lord of Poyntztett, nothing could be made of the town-council, and no satisfactory result elicited. The reluctance of many worthy members astonished Mr. Omichund, who knew their opinions better than themselves, but the courtesy of the council was lost in the certainty that they should be laughed at. The fear of ridicule in them overcame the love of servility.

Nevertheless, there was a grand civic dinner given to the heir of Poyntztett, at which that young gentleman uttered his maiden address

to the public. He not maladroitly handled the prominent question of the day; that he would never be for what made the sustenance of the people more dear or more difficult to obtain. He was for superseding the present hard-hearted relation of employer and employed, by the old and more generous one of patron and client. He would not leave to the poor all the task and responsibility of not only earning for the day, but providing for the future of his family, rearing them, educating them, keeping them and self from crime. He would not offer a daily shilling to the working man, and then tell him that with that shilling all their physical wants were to be supplied, and moral duties performed. All these were easy to the rich, whilst they were labours of Hercules to the poor.

We will not weary the reader with Mr. Poyntz's Young-England speech, which made the corporation stare. Mr. Omichund's eyes twinkled with delight, as Mr. Wherry extended his snuff-box; whilst Bishop Stromboli beheld a second Daniel come to judgment. The good mayor, however, had discernment enough to declare, that although he admired Mr. Poyntz exceedingly, he could not say that he

comprehended his new University principles, which he feared might prove impracticable in a community such as Shuttlefield.

The Poyntztett question, trifling as it might seem, stirred other depths and minds in the town than civic ones. The working classes were divided into almost as many shades as the trading and employing ones. Of these we shall at present mention but two as the most prominent, and as those under which most opinions and characters ranged themselves. These were the old hands and the *locos*. The old hands were a worn-out and miserable, starved and benighted set. They had once been prosperous. Memory told of the time when they had been so. And the memory also survived of how bad times, and machinery, and rival establishments in more favoured sites, had screwed, and pinched, and brought them down; of how the operatives, then more scattered through the country, had risen and taken revenge by burning and destroying machinery, which had only the effect of making the trade thrive elsewhere. Want, alarm, and severe police had brought them to order, and ground them nearer to starvation: against which they murmured and protested by the

old ways of what was once called radicalism, when radicalism meant physical resistance.

The *locos*, a new school of operatives, were prosperous now, as the old hands had been thirty years before. They were chiefly workers in iron, whilst the others were manipulators of cotton. They could well earn their thirty and forty shillings a week; whilst the others were compelled to support themselves and families on a third of that sum. Physical and mental energy were taxed to exertion in the one; whilst both were reduced to nothing or ground to powder in the other.

Hitherto in England, some will say, by a kind of providential law, all that class of labour which required and developed great physical strength, was at the same time debasing. Such is the underground work of the miner; such is the Cornish, the northern, the Welsh population, that extract the ore from their native districts, that are capable of listening and kindling at the words of a Wesley or a Frost, and of following either the saint or the insurrectionist, but with no constant purpose or intelligent aim.

But in our day has sprung up a phenomenon, of which people are not fully aware.

There is an extensive class of workmen, employed in that ruder labour, which develops physical powers, but which at the same time arouses mental effort, and repays it. These are the mechanicians, with all the traders and earners that hang upon them. Of old they were to be found, mustered in some thousands at Birmingham, or scattered by twos and threes throughout the empire. Now they form a class, living and prospering on those great iron lines of communication which called them into existence, running personally from one end of their line to the other; and all therefore in personal contact and sympathy from John o'Groat's to the Land's End. The stupid ostler, as Lord Malmesbury observed, the bloated coachman, the slang-learned guard, with all the old fogies of the old system of locomotion, have disappeared to make way for them. They are educated, and are becoming more so; not a few of the classes above them have drifted down amongst them. Skilled artificers and all other traders have a tendency to sympathise and amalgamate with them; and thus a new body of skilled operatives has risen up in the empire, fast superseding the influence of the old, who were either stirred

by mere material impatience, or calmed by purely religious resignation. Their successors, less precipitate in outbreak, though less patient of wrong, are very likely one day to present, under quite a new phase, the old antagonism between employers and employed.

When a class of skilled labourers, like this, is first called into existence, of course it is amply remunerated; and the tendency of course comes by and by to reduce such advantages. All these were in operation at the time of our story, which indeed may be considered the present time. Another peculiarity in the case, and in the circumstances of the day, is that the employers of this class of labourers are those concrete and collective personages called companies,—employers that may be supposed to have no bowels, no paternal care; and whose tendency is, far more than any other employers, to reduce men to the state and condition of machines. Thus whilst Young England and Mr. Poyntz were raving of the necessity of bringing back the condition of labourers, and the relation of employer and employed, to the model of feudal ages, the times had taken a turn precisely in the opposite direction, and invented a kind of master

and employer, as removed from and contrasted with the feudal baron as could be imagined. The capitalist, overseeing his own factory, has still some resemblance to the baron ; but, alas ! a joint-stock company has none.

On the subject of Poyntztett, its lords and its fate, the old hands evinced the extremes of opinion ; some were for throwing up their caps, others for seizing the opportunity to burn the ducal mansion, and level its park walls. The former had been seduced by the traditions of the place, and the stories of the old freemen, vaunting the bribes and the beer, of which the Duke's agents were prodigal at every election, and every festivity that foreshadowed it ; for to make a great house-warming of the young lord's coming of age, meant nothing more, they conjectured, than his intention to stand for borough or for county. The pot-wallopers, however, were far from being the majority.

The stern feeling of hopeless discontent ground into the souls of many by constant toil, from which no providence or industry could give them relief, and even that toil broken in upon by periods of idleness, accompanied by want and its anxieties :—this had generated

in many minds the feelings of the wild beast of the forest; that is, a consciousness that they were regarded as beasts of prey, and an anxiety to reverse their lot by preying and destroying in their turn. But their energies and despair had been directed so idly, had selected such stupid leaders, been called forth so unseasonably, and be encrushed so efficiently and contemptuously, that they were, in truth, the object of pity, not of fear.

The forum of the politicians of Shuttlefield was a beer-shop and skittle-ground, that would have afforded a very beautiful view over green fields and parks, if the high wall of Poyntztett had not intersected it; the free air of the park, however, reached it, and created a diversion in the serried atmosphere of the smoky, toiling, grimy town. Yet there was not that flocking of the artizans and of their families countryward, even upon Sundays and holidays, that might have been expected. It was astonishing the number whom listlessness induced to prefer the kennel and the puddle, and who avoided anything new in the sight of fields or the breath of pure air, as a disturb-repose, and a wake-thought, that would be unwelcome.

The skittle-ground was not empty on the evening in question, nor the benches which afforded repose to lookers-on. Thaddeus, a young *loco*, was giving forth his views of men and things with much volubility and assurance. He professed himself very indignant at the idea of the industrious and independent citizens of Shuttlefield going to mingle with the legion of lacqueys at Poyntztett, in order to do homage to the lord of the manor, as if the manufacturing town of Shuttlefield was a village of serfs. This eloquence was listened to in no acquiescent silence by an operative, whose countenance evinced the epicurean, accustomed to combat the trials and afflictions of life by any excitant that his means could command.

"These be Yankee notions of yours, young 'un," said he. "Masters we must have in this yere land. All can't have the purse, and those who haven't any must come to those that have,—aye, and be cap in hand to them. Where's the hardship in the obligation to be civil. You've got a foreman, haven't you, and you do what he bids you? You're glad to please and make him like you."

"I care not a fig who likes me," said

Thaddeus. "I do my duty, and that's enough."

"'Tisn't enough. I have done my duty afore now, and got sacked for it."

"And this has taught you to love and honour your masters."

"No, it hasn't; but it has taught me to take things as I find them, and make the best of them."

"Take a bribe when you can get it, and beer when you can get no more."

"That same. If I've a wote, and see no difference 'twixt them who asks it, why should not I give my wote for a consideration, as well on a toss up, for no reason at all?"

"You are a low fellow," said Thaddeus, "not to find a better reason than a bribe, and to love nothing but lords and fleshpots."

"Lor bless you, I 'arn twelve shillings a week. 'Tant more than'll pay baker and lodging. These be necessities. If amusement or a spree offer, am I to refuse it? Doesn't the providence that sends one send t'other?"

"You make providence a pimp," said Thaddeus.

"Don't waste your big words upon me. Here's Ned Strike you can talk to. He'll

flare up for you, like a lion in the cage when the keeper pokes him. He's always ready for a bit of excitement, but I loves quiet, you see."

"I'm for quiet, too," said Thaddeus; "and I think that we workmen might do many things for ourselves, if we were to set about it together, quietly, and understand just what we want, and what we ought to have."

"And how are you to get it, when you have fixed what you want?" asked Ned Strike.

"We'd get plenty persons able to right us—to exert themselves to do so—if we knew our own minds. How did you get your hours of work shortened?"

"Why, by playing the squires against the mill-owners," said the man we call Epicurus; "there's nothing the one won't do to spite the other. The squires have given short time, and the others will make bread cheap in despite of the squires. Now, my plan is to humour them both, flatter them both, and take from them what each are willing and able to give."

"When rogues fall out," said Thaddeus, smiling, and rather pleased, for the first time,

with the views of his good-humoured and no-principled comrade.

"They'll agree fast enough," said Ned Strike, "to keep you out of whatever's worth having. Who wants their learning, but the young, who ask to go play or go to learn? What'll learning do for them? Get 'em another shilling a-week? no, but learn 'em, sir, to spend one. And what's cheap corn, but lower wages after a time? I don't care for cheap things. I was a great deal better off when everything was dear, and man's work dearer than any. A man wants but two things—wages, that he can lay by out of; and work, that he can reckon on. If Parliament can't do that, Parliament is worth nothing, and we should try to make a Parliament of our own to do it. That's my mind."

"How can you fix wages?" was asked.

"The rich have these things fixed, why should not the poor? Isn't rent fixed? If rent wa'n't able to support the gentlemen, what a row they'd make! If the millionaires don't make a profit, what a rumpus they make! Yet they are all wise, and take care of themselves, whilst the poor man can't."

"Well, now," said Epicurus, "I hear that

the great Duke of Poyntztett, whom we all envy, and whom Thaddeus will not have us go to compliment, is not so rich or so comfortable after all ; that he's as plagued with old scores of debts as any of us that have been out of work for a month ; and that which he squeezes from his tenants is squeezed out of him by the money-lender. He can't help himself, you see, no more than we."

"They have been helping themselves, from father to son, for many a generation ; it is time for them to stand on their own legs," said Thaddeus.

"Burn 'em out and out !" said Ned Strike ; "what's the good in being a duke, when he can no longer help himself, much less others ? It is like our masters there, of the mills. They're good people enough when they're making plenty of money, and when they can afford to lose it, rather than let the poor workmen starve. But put their nose to the grindstone for money, and the poor must go to the devil. Mill-owner or squire, to my mind, they ought to be burnt out when poor, and richer men put in their place. 'Tis the way they sarve us. When the youth, and the muscle, and sharp eye and ready hand of the workman is gone,

get him to the poorhouse. I would make the rich swallow that law, at any rate, when they have lost their riches: it is their own law."

"And what are you to gain by burning Poyntztett, flinging the Poyntzes to their own hounds, and levelling the park walls?"

"I should like that least," said Thaddeus; "and planting tall chimneys in the place of the tall oaks. We're not the better for being many, and I don't see that the land is the better for it."

"If we had but the masters to deal with," said Strike, "we could deal with them; but the tune is, that when we grumble, they call on the landlords and the yeomen, the magistrate and the justice, the judges and the parsons—and down they come upon us. They used to gallop over us. But now they treat us as felons, and send us to the treadmill and work-gang, because we won't starve peaceably."

"I tell you," said Epicurus, "you could get the squires to take your part, instead of helping the masters to keep you down, if you would be wise, and take friends when you can get them. Did you hear what Mr. Poyntz said at the Town Hall, under the very nose of masters? he took the part of the working man."

"Why does'nt he take the part of his own clodhoppers, then? Why does he stop the field paths? Did'nt they order the gagging laws, and all the laws against the people? And what's the use of their promising the fine things they will do, when they are in place, and never think of, once they get there? I'm for the Charter, and a work-man's Parliament!"

"And I," said Thaddeus, "am for never trusting Parliament, till we can send to it the men of the working classes of England; when those classes can show that they understand each other's interests and their own; that they can associate to forward and defend them; that they have as much knowledge, and more, perhaps, than their masters; that life and labour is not to be ground out of them to make money for others, till enough be secured them to leave competence to themselves. Knowledge and civilization, education and good fellowship—no blows, no threats, and no riots."

"Child's play!" said Ned Strike; "combination to do nothing—to spend money and spend patience, and scribble and jabber. I tell you what, Mister Thaddeus, you can't set

a pot a-boiling, and then tell it to stay still—the fire will boil away the water, or the water boil over and put out the fire. We must be lions and tigers, and have a row ; or be mice, and rest quiet. Your moral business, as you call it, is humbug.”

“And that’s true for you !” exclaimed Epicurus, chuckling.

“I fear there is a quantity of truth in that, Ned Strike,” said Thaddeus, “and more is the pity. We must remain the fools we are ; and as long as we’re fools, we’re slaves !”

CHAPTER III.

THE Worksworths, to whom Lord Armington alluded as the chief mortgagees of his property, were what a herald would call "of yesterday." They were originally residents of Shuttlefield, and manufacturers of that town. But having set about introducing certain improvements in machinery, which, if generally adopted, would have kept Shuttlefield on a par of industry and importance with the cluster of towns that had risen westward of it, and which were flourishing by the subjugation of steam into a bondman, the family became an object of hatred to the operatives. On one occasion they burnt his chief mill, sacked his residence, and put the lives of the family in jeopardy. He therefore shook the dust of Shuttlefield from his feet, and retired to what was then a village, at no great distance, but still beyond walking distance from the Shuttle-

field mob. There he settled in a vale, where were several detached villages; where there were water and coal, and all the elements of industry.

In an incredibly small number of years, the vale became a town, hovels became factories, sheep-tracks streets; nor were verdure and ornament wanting. For all near the place improved save the river, which certainly took a dark tinge, and seemed to channel the waters of Phlegethon through a valley, that was certainly of no condemned or gloomy realm. Here the family grew and split, not unfriendlily, one settling in one town of the manufacturing district, another in another, the same faculty of acquiring and amassing wealth being common to all; and neither the skill nor ardour requisite for such an aim diminishing in the family. They were potent people in their district—no feudal or landed chief more so. Their influence was more universally and widely felt. A friendly look from them was credit, a smile of theirs fortune. Their wealth, rendered productive by the turning of capital, and employment of labour, told every fraction of it, and was hourly and daily felt; whilst fable and imagination were as busy in adorning and exaggerating their property and power, as ever

they were in swelling the thewes of Hercules, or the armies of Xerxes, to superhuman strength and dimensions.

The persons in whose hands this immense wealth came to settle, were of an old English sect, most rigid in their morals, manners, dress, and aspect. They all from the first set at nought the vanities of the world, and clung to what they considered its realities. But, alas! what is wealth but a mine of vanities, and to what reality, in a religious sense, can superfluous thousands be applied? Yet it was a noble thought that inspired the great founder of this sect. He had lived in the seventeenth century, and was a personage of station. He had witnessed all the madness of democracy, and the still greater insanity of mere democracy applied to religion. He had lived through the reign of Presbyterian and Independent, and when corruption and slavery came in with the Court and Bishops, he decided that there was no remedy for the evil. He therefore formed a middle-class sect, of which industry should be the principle. In it he tried to blend the high principle of the gentleman—I say, of the gentleman, because it was founded on respectability, more than upon right, divine or

human—with the virtues of the industrious man. He took of life a certain quantum of domestic enjoyment, and proscribed everything else that savoured of pleasure. This second Ignatius, in substituting industry for asceticism, and avarice for vanity, said in fact to his followers, Make money as fast, and as much as you can; but so educate yourselves, and so live, that you can make no possible use of it.

Whether this was the cause or not, it was at least certain, that none of the sect rose out of that middle and industrious class for which their talents and aims were formed. When riches did thrust them from that sphere into the higher one of English life, one of two things happened—either that the Croesus denied the peculiar tenets of his ancestors, and forsook their habits; or, if he religiously resolved to adhere to them, he and his family pined away in a life that had no longer any object, or excitement, or amusement, or interest.

The late Mr. Worksworth had found himself in this state. He had built a mansion, splendid in size and comfort, though with a plain brick front. He had situated it high to meet the breeze, and resolved to avoid the smoke and escape the bustle of the manufacturing town,

Yet he had not one rural taste, not one country aim. He longed for he knew not what ; but it was, in truth, for an exchange or market, to frequent every day and transact that business which had been the sole pleasure of his life. But happiness was said to be in retirement, and he sought it as the dumb man might seek an echo to his voice.

Mr. Worksworth had two brothers, settled at no great distance, each of whom had realized a fortune almost equal to his own. Had the family done as Mr. Rothschild of Frankfort pointed out, and enjoined to his sons, settled in different capitals, and played the game of wealth into each other's hands, they might have assumed an European position. But experience and even sagacity are not to be transferred from one walk of money-turning to another. And there was no object for such exertion. Of two Mr. Worksworths, one was unmarried, the other had no children. And Mr. Worksworth of the Vale had but one daughter, who thus had the prospect of being the richest heiress in England.

Naomi Worksworth received the most singular education that could be given to a person situated as she was. Her mother and aunts

held frequent councils on the very subject of the young girl's education, in which Mr. Worksworth had the idea and the hope that something was possible to be done. But after infinite argumentation and reasoning, amongst their worshipful relations, it was at last decided, *nemine contradicente*, that nothing could be done ; that languages were useless, history a snare, poetry and music profanation ; that it was impossible to teach one kind of knowledge or accomplishment, without a more objectionable kind slipping in, and that absolute prohibition was safer than exemption. The parents of Naomi were both inclined to abate of this rigidity, if they saw how it could be done. And they might plead several members and families of their sect, worthy, pious, and respected, who were by no means so rigid, and who thought that education and information, instead of marring piety, improved it. But the childless Mrs. Worksworth, aunt of Naomi, being her mother's sister, was as rigid as if she had gone out in the *Mayflower* ; that is, been born in an epoch, when literature was really profane, and when what was called the accomplishments of womanhood and society, might well be eschewed.

Naomi made no protest against her reading being confined to the Bible, but she took a personal part in the serious debates which took place on the cut and colour of her dress. The girl was decidedly for reform and innovation. She had an early dislike to dull colours, and was scarcely out of her teens when she pronounced the shape of her mother's and aunt's bonnets to be hideous.

"Where could Naomi have got such an idea, and where could she have got such a word!" was her aunt's exclamation. And she proceeded to answer the query herself, by declaring that such ideas could proceed from none but the Pistruccis. And hereupon Mrs. William Worksworth set about tearing the poor Pistruccis to pieces, whilst Naomi and her father both laboured in earnest to put their torn characters together again.

"It will be just the same as it was with the Harwoods," continued Mrs. William, "who were the most regular and most estimable people in the world, until they were told that art was wanting to the manufactures. They accordingly fill their house with artists, and their heads with artist ideas, until the very women of the family came to know, and to

think what beauty was. Beauty! they were not ashamed to talk of it."

"Nor to accomplish it," said Mr. Workworth; "for instead of the form and design of our country's manufacture, in this branch, being so uncouth and forbidding as to be totally repelled from foreign markets, the Harwoods began themselves, with a few other manufacturers, to introduce such beauty of form and design that would, with solidity and cheapness, leave them undisputed masters of the foreign as well as the home market."

"Still you must own, brother, that this has brought odd men and odd ideas amongst us. And that the worldliness which we abhor and should have shunned, has broken in amongst us in the shape of art in manufacture."

"Can there be a more irreproachable man than Mr. Pistrucci?"

"He thinks of nothing more than the outside, and the ornamental part of the temple."

"That is his trade. He would put beauty on everything. Would not we have clothed the world with cotton?"

"And Mrs. Pistrucci is as good as she is handsome," said Naomi.

"Handsome!" said her aunt; "there

again. She has turned the heads and caps of half Worksworth Vale ! ”

Naomi blushed at this observation ; for, in truth, she and Mrs. Pistrucci had entered into a conspiracy to cashier the traditional bonnet, which was the head-gear of the sect, and substitute for it something human. The “*Ravished Tub*” of the Italian poet was nothing to the famous bonnet, and the feud which it occasioned. Bishop Stromboli himself never expended more learning in proving that a certain kind of regeneration was worked *by* the priest, and not *through* him. So the heterodoxy and orthodoxy of certain ribbons were discussed, and not only their peculiar shade of colour anathematized or defended, but even the difference of said ribbon encompassing the bonnet, or merely being appended as strings or ties to it, formed the subject of a week’s negotiation. It ended for the time in Naomi’s resumption of the head-gear of her foremothers, and a resolve to innovate and disobey quietly, for the improvement of her mind, rather than enter upon open rebellion for the mere adornment of her person.

Some time, however, before this story opens, the three brothers Worksworth expired, in

the fulness of wealth rather than of years. Naomi also lost her mother; and the young lady found herself at Highlands, in a situation of affluence and influence only to be equalled by the tremendous solitude that surrounded her greatness. Like Juan Fernandez, Naomi was monarch of all she surveyed—although what use to make of the sceptre she had not at first the remotest idea.

She summoned her aunt to Highlands, despite her orthodoxy in the matter of bonnets, whilst the management of the Worksworth property continued to repose in the hands which had gradually been acquiring the control over it. This was in those of Mr. Plynlimon—a relative of her aunt—a very revered, very broad, very strict, and responsible member of the religious community to which the Worksworths belonged.

The greater part of his property had, however, been converted by Naomi's father into land. In his selection of this for purchase, he had not been in the least guided by political considerations. He bought what was fertile and cheap, likely to be well situated for lines of communication. Though the chance of being a large mortgagee on a property often

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rendered him the final possessor of it, without much choice as to its fitness or its joining on with the rest, he bought land, as opportunity offered, and marvelled at the difference of price in a commodity that ought to have a known and market value. He overlooked the great value of the social eminence and political influence, attached to landed property in England, which distracts both purchaser and proprietor from that true productive value, which ought to be the only consideration. This at first not having entered into his calculation, he was rather surprised to find political and other influences accrue to him, which he had not reckoned upon, and which, in truth, he knew not what to do with.

Naomi, who succeeded to all these cares and duties, was a long time ere she could take anything like a just or comprehensive view of them. She saw enough, however, to terrify her exceedingly; and she marvelled at any system that could advance her, a child, untutored and unprepared, into a place where her will was to decide upon the fortunes of men, and to influence the very policy of the state. Her aunt observed to such an expression of feeling, that nature pointed out the

very way to solve the difficulty at once. "Choose a husband; and on him devolve the burden, which was never intended to rest on the shoulders of a woman."

Naomi said she was as unprepared for the choosing of a husband, as for the selection of the curate of a parish or the manager of a mill. Besides, she could not take such a step, or look upon it as a matter of business. She needed impulse,—some strong impulse,—such as a sense of expediency or worldly business could not give.

There are a great many people, says some French writer, who would never have fallen in love, if they never had heard talk of it. Naomi had scarcely ever heard talk of it. The host of ideas connected with it, which social intercourse as well as literature elicit, had been shut out from her. She had no romance connected with it. Such husbands as she had seen in the range of possibility, were not subjects for the imagination to admire or reproduce. The graceful and the noble were signalled out for her abhorrence. The efforts of those around her had been to reduce all that was woman in her to zero, without, at the same time, giving her any of the severer

aims and occupations of the man. Some barbarous countries compress the heads of their infants, and even civilized countries contract their feet. We doubt if either are more preposterous than the effort to unwomanize woman by the suppression of even virtuous sentiment, under the pretence that it is indecorous or immoral.

Naomi had frequently been addressed by one who, it was hinted, would in some years be no unfitting husband for her. He was of her own class, was unobjectionable in form and character, belonged to her own sect, but not to the over rigid portion of it. He had well educated himself, and sought information in travel and in the world. And though numbers said that refined and travelled tastes would unfit him for trade, and that educational vanity would swell his mind to burst the narrow limits of his sect, he belied that prognostication. He was as active and successful in the one respect, as regular and humble in the other. Mr. Pevensey, it was known, too, had talents above his walk of life, however contented he might appear with it, for he eminently enjoyed the gift of speech. His ideas came naturally to his tongue in

rapid and yet lucid succession. Though cold in all other respects, he grew warm as an orator. He even became too eager and interested not to be present when respectable men congregated for public or local affairs, and he was seldom present without being called on.

Mr. Pevensey had addressed Naomi; to whom, indeed, he might boast some relationship. But his remarks were almost those that a grown person might address to a child. And Naomi, who knew that he had other thoughts and topics, was nettled at being so addressed. She could not but admit, that had he addressed her on any more serious topic, and with maturer ideas, she probably would not have comprehended him, or would not have known what to answer. Still she could not bear the idea of being treated as an intellectual cipher. Her spirit rebelled against it; and even had she a susceptible heart, pride kept too jealous a guard over it to permit it to be propitiated even on the knee. A lover on even ground might be tolerated; but one that looks from any height of intellect on the object of his pretended adoration, may not possibly hope to deceive it into acceptance.

Mr. Pevensey was the very gentleman in her aunt's thoughts, when the latter rather abruptly and precipitately bade her niece drown her cares in a husband. But it awakened other thoughts than marriage in Naomi's thoughts, when she made known the object of her selection. And Naomi coloured at the name, not with love, but with shame and rivalry. Instead of sending her to the glass to adjust her curls, she turned her thoughts to the but too empty shelves of her library, a determination kindling in her mind to acquire all that information of men, life, and books, which puts one being on a par with the other. The conversation thus led to an order on the bookseller, not on the milliner, to the very considerable confusion of Mrs. William Worksworth, who could not imagine why her good advice produced so often an effect the very contrary of that intended.

Mrs. Worksworth marvelled over the indefatigable studies of her niece, and was still more at a loss to discover the nature and ground of her reserve. Mr. Plynlimon declared that she overwhelmed him with questions which he did not understand, with inquiries concerning her own prospects and attributes

far more minute than ever her father made. "Yet with all this bother, she seems not to have the idea of either making or saving a guinea." It was, in fact, not that philosopher's stone which turns baser metals into gold that Naomi sought, but that other philosopher's stone, that was to reward enthusiasm with immortality.

There was still a volume to study, and that was the world; a volume not rare nor closed but still very difficult to get juvenile opportunities of studying. It is so immense, and contains so much to fathom and to see, that a life may be spent between two gigantic pages without a glimpse being had of the very next page, much less of the contents of the mighty volume.

CHAPTER IV.

"AND why don't thee make up to the heiress, George? Thou wast an old sweetheart of her's for sure, and ye used to spell and stitch on the same stool."

"That was all very well," replied George, "when Pevensey and Worksworth, if they did not row in the same boat, kept the same pace: when you was a rich farmer, with wheat at a hundred shillings, and Mr. Worksworth a Shuttlefield weaver, whose capital would not stretch beyond his Saturday nights. His 'prentice then, I was one of his family and class, but his family have long since left Shuttlefield and us behind."

"They are not the worse for making themselves as big as their betters. Who would not do the same? They were good people, and are still, what is left of them, I'll be bound."

"I never said they were bad, father. But they have the pride of their new fortune. And I'll not go on my knees to any."

"To any man, no : but a woman, George !"

"If Naomi were not rich, were she even but moderately rich, I could fling myself down to kiss the ground before her. I don't require urging, father. She'll never be loved more than I love her. I have never dreamt of other than her. But she has grown cold and queen-like in her grandeur. And although my care would be a fortune to her,—for she will be preyed upon, and deceived, and robbed, by dozens of fools or knaves,—I could not follow or flatter her, or even let her know that my boy's feelings remain the same, enlarged into the man's. She has risen beyond our sphere, and we have somewhat sunk in ours."

The two women present, George's sister and niece, uttered exclamations of pride and pain.

"And who stands more respected than you in Shuttlefield, George ? There is a character that is better than even gold. And a man may be looked up to in England for something else than guineas."

"Nay, father," interrupted George ; but the old man continued,—

"I know what you would say. The old farm is no longer what it used to be, nor the old farmer either. It is no longer corn and beeves that fetch price in the market. It is no longer on land that money produces tenfold, or even twofold. It is no longer the farmer that can give food and employ without stint or calculation. The farmer's horse has gone to the plough, and his parlour has fallen well nigh into his kitchen. Be it so, George. It's an old man's blunder to rest true to a failing trade. But better times may come, George, and at all events I am now old, and disgrace no one."

"George," said Miss Pevensey, "you are cruel to twit father in this way. If your free-trade notions had not come into the world, we would be above pitying."

"The Duke of Armington, my dear sister, was ruined before free-trade was thought of. And how is a farmer to be fairly dealt with, if his landlord is struggling with a debt that would bring any tradesman's property to the hammer?"

The Pevenseys had been extensive farmers for many generations in ——shire, but had never risen from out that class, however

enjoying comfort and respectability, and possessed of capital, much of which might at times have been spared, or been turned to speculations of more promise. Although the war found them farmers and left them so, they were almost gentlemen farmers at the time of its expiral. But this was in no wise an improvement. The crest of the elder son rose against the ploughshare altogether, and he volunteered. His father bought a commission for him. But it was late in the war, and 1815 found him a lieutenant. He had his life to pass in the half-pay of his rank, ornamented as it became, though not improved, by the brevet of Captain, till he exchanged his half-pay for a grant of colonial land, married late, and wrote home that he was doing middling as a colonial agriculturist. Another brother followed his example, as far as exchanging his home for the foreign sickle. He emigrated to America, and brought one of his sisters with him. George, the youngest of the family, had been bound to Mr. Worksworth and Shuttlefield, and shared the fortunes of that struggling town. The remaining sister would not see her father abandoned in his old days, and abode by him and his farm, refusing a good offer of marriage that

she might so devote herself. She regretted not the sacrifice, but kept the sense of it, which served as a whet to her own temper, and a claim to others' respect.

"The man that lives in Shuttlefield," said George, "need not think of marriage; he has a family and its cares always ready to his hand."

"What do you mean, George?" said his father in some alarm.

"I mean that, to manage the poor and the periodically starving in Shuttlefield, requires all a man's wits, and what is worse, all his resources."

"Tut, boy!" said Mr. Pevensey, "if the poor, being badly off, were to prevent those who are a little better off from marrying, there would be an end of John Bull's race; for the poor stare with their gaunt faces everywhere. Poverty does not prevent their marrying,—why should it prevent us?"

"It ought to, then, father, if little books say true," observed Miss Pevensey.

"The decrees of moralists," said George, "who would deny men all cheap and natural pleasures, unless fortune has sent them, at the same time, wherewithal to procure dear ones,

are idle, unless they come armed with the whip or the thunderbolt."

"And do they not come so attended?" asked Miss Pevensey; "what is hunger?"

"Ay, indeed, we see it striding every day. The potatoes are gone, and the corn crop does not promise abundance."

"Prices are fair," said the farmer.

"Shuttlefield begins to stir with them."

"It is getting up a League, is it?"

"Not a thought of the League in Shuttlefield. They go for employment to bring food, rather than for cheap food," said George.

"And they are right," said the farmer.

"A fair day's wage for a fair day's labour," said George, "these are what they want; and both assured them."

"And who is to ensure them?"

"Ay, there is the point. Dennis O'Dowd tells them the Charter will enable the people to feed themselves, and take what slices of the loaf they please. Mr. Dexter recommends them to restore the old poor-law, where they might dig, and weave, and make up what they want by begging. Lord Armington would have them starve contentedly. Lord Poyntz would stick a cheap loaf on a pole for those

who wish to get double rations ; but the poor, when set on thinking of their condition, are like mariners in certainty of shipwreck—they scorn the bread-room, and make for the spirit-store.”

“ Have they no one,” said Miss Pevensey, “ to tell them that life is a trial, suffering the holiest part of our nature, and looking for recompense to a good hereafter ? ”

“ That is a good doctrine,” said George, “ but it is for mental sorrow, which naturally looks for its true healing without the world : for food we must look to the world : it is full of wealth and food. It is man, and his laws, and his hardheartedness, that seem to refuse, and stand in the way of their distribution.”

“ Ay, that’s the new Shuttlefield religion,” said Mr. Pevensey ; “ the rich are to blame, whenever the poor want.”

“ The blame is put upon them,” said George, “ not only because they are rich, but because they govern.”

“ It is with confoundedly long reins, then, that some of them govern,” said the farmer.

The county in which the newly-acquired property of the Worksworths was situated, and where Poyntztett rose, and Shuttlefield

carried on its agitated and struggling existence, offered everything that could interest and perplex those who studied, or who sought either to exercise philanthropy or acquire ascendancy.

It was on the verge of the great manufacturing region of England, and had been a manufacturing district when that region was still unexplored, unbuilt upon, and unpeopled. The western part of the county was undulating, and watered by abundant streams, in which the mill-wheel was used to turn long before the tall chimneys smoked. The produce of its manufacture was of a homely wear, a common object of consumption, not such as would tempt foreign customers to buy largely, but such as was indispensable to the natives of England. Consequently, these articles of commerce necessarily had been from time out of mind first knit, then woven in the cottage of the poor, and collected by the merchant. This primitive system of manufacturing isolatedly, each workman in his house, necessarily augmented the population of the district, and mingled the calling of the land and the loom, making the peasant richer and more comfortable, the weaver more healthy and independent.

The females partook largely of the general well-being, for they could earn, and without losing homely virtues and qualities. Shuttlefield was the chief town and centre; but there were numerous towns in which workmen of peculiar kinds and parts of the manufacture congregated,—where it was pleasant to see all prosper together in the same occupation, without rivalry; but where it was melancholy to foresee, if any did foresee it, that a revulsion of taste or improvement in machinery would condemn all to endure adversity at the same time, without chance or possibility of mutual aid.

Foreseen or not, the day of adversity arrived. Prices fell, and famine came. The men of the mineral regions taxed their ingenuity to make the most of their resources. Steam and machines were made largely and cheaply to do the work of many men; and it was necessary to adopt them, even at all disadvantage, in a region of water-power and hand-labour.

The war soon sprang up of arm against wheel, hand against steam. Machines were broken, turbulence prevailed; and when, in time, the agricultural population were de-

pressed, they too thought it fair reprisals to mar the prospects of the rich, and to thwart employers who ceased to employ. But the turbulent men of an English population are few; and their turbulence can find different modes and issues of vent, which sensibly lessen the dangers of a general explosion. Many hie to America or the colonies; and the committal of no very heinous crime—say a poaching adventure—was sufficient to despatch many a brave and not dishonoured spirit as a convict to Australia. Enough, however, remained behind, to ferment, to suffer, and to rot.

Even when trade was prosperous, and provisions abundant, the transition from hand work to machinery was a painful and trying one to the population, whose agricultural habits and earnings, being mingled up with manufacturing ones, had the bad effect of rendering the weavers more fractious, more reluctant and unable to move, more intent upon the soil, and attracted to it, without which they might have had the spirit to turn away, and seek homes and livings elsewhere. The different landlords, and different burgess corporations, applied different remedies to

the alleviating—many of them successfully—the evils which it would have been wiser to remove.

When Naomi Worksworth gradually awoke—and many months it took to awake her, deprived as she had been of the usual aids and stepping-stones of common education—to a full knowledge of the circumstances in which fortune had placed her, it was the complication of social miseries, in districts which she was told she possessed, that laid hold of her mind, and filled it with interest, with cares, and with anxieties, instead of the usual kind of purposes, and train of ideas, that might be supposed to start up before and seize upon a girl's imagination. With a heart like other people's, she had not been taught that it was all in all. Her religious training had conveyed the good lesson of putting duties before impulse, and her seclusion saved her from factitious impulses. But the first aim into which especially a woman flings herself, after the attainment of free action and free will, becomes of itself a passion. And this passion, in Naomi, unfortunately for its gratification or fulfilment, surpassed all the labours of Hercules taken together; for it was no less

than to put a stop to the degradation, depopulation, and distress, of a very large district of the country, which had been suffering and sinking for years, and had defied alike the ingenuity of philanthropists and economists.

Miss Worksworth at first had few counselors, though the number of them increased till at last they became almost as many as the opinions of the day, and of as many shades as the leaves of the forest. Her aunt, when she alone had her ear, suggested that the want of religion caused every ill, even that of destitution; and that a supply of zealous religious teaching would suffice to bring, not only consolation, but food. Naomi had abundance of letters, which showed that many estimable and active persons partook of this view; for she was beset with petitions and requests to subscribe for the building of this church, the extension of that chapel, for endowing more clergy of every denomination, and for equipping missionaries to set forth upon the task of converting souls to Christianity in this benighted land. She thought of her father's sect, but it had no poor; it was exclusively a middle-class sect, of sufficiently educated men, who were a priesthood to each other,

and whose only fault was their having invented and set up a religion, which was only fit for a certain portion of mankind in a middle station, which scarcely admitted the rich and the powerful, and which knew as little how to comprehend the poor.

There were other sects, which embraced a much lower class, and which supplied clergy possessed of the sympathies of that class, from the circumstance of their not being over-educated, and who made up in zeal what they wanted in knowledge.

The inspection of these religious communities, and acquaintance with their pastors, led Naomi to recollect her father's plain objection to a priesthood. They were without influence, he said, if of education inferior to their flocks; and if of education on a par with their flocks, they either slumbered and did nothing, or else appealed to the weaker intellects of their flocks, kindling fanaticism, where they ought to have instilled piety.

But Naomi was no longer of her father's sect. Indeed, in the latter days of his life, he admitted the justice of the objections which she did not pretend to conceal. She had indeed none of her father's dislike of the

priesthood ; and rejoiced, as a woman in possession of property and influence, that there did exist a class, and a powerful class, who lived by the practice, profession, and propagation of Christian motives.

But whether religion would cure indigence, was quite another question. In days of old, when sects were formed, and when men had heart and spirit to form them, the sect was never a merely religious association ; except in so far as religious belief and practice included everything. Amongst the old Puritans, their social and political circumstances were wrapped up in the religious union. Nay, their habits and industry made part of their creed also. When they met and took counsel, their physical condition was considered as well as their moral. And when either was menaced, they could take a resolution—sail in the “ Mayflower ” for the promised land on the other side of the Atlantic—or take such vigorous steps in concert at home, to secure to all the bread of this world as well as the bread of life. Indeed, all old religions provided for the indigent, and made alms a duty ; but the artificial development of modern society demands something other, and something more,

than almsgiving, which no longer answers the original purpose. Law will not do, if it be a hard law, or one reasoned out by economists. Christian principles must be reduced to practice in the dealing with the destitute: and the rich and powerful should set their intellects to work to do this; for if they shirk this duty, or fail in it, the poor will set up a rival religion for themselves, as they have striven to do in many countries, when, as their hands are unskilful, their passions strong, and their guides blind, ruin and destruction will come of it, unless social and moral, as well as religious wants and aspirations, be satisfied.

Amongst the places from which came frequent demands for pecuniary aid, accompanied by accounts of suffering and privation that harrowed the very soul, Brinkly was the foremost. It had once been flourishing—flourishing because it produced a peculiar kind of stockings. Some other manufacturer, of some other town, succeeded in making a stocking to all appearance as perfect and as good, but infinitely cheaper. Brinkly was ruined.

Brinkly was a most religious town; its operatives had a clergy of their own, and a church of their own class—good men, who

had gained complete mastery over the men of Brinkly. They employed their influence to preach resignation. Ruin was represented as a visitation of Heaven, sent in love as much as anger. The people bore. Employers, ruined themselves, offered the poor means of existence as wages; it was accepted, and nightly praises returned to Heaven for the pittance. So much, so strong, so continuous, so powerful, was the religious spirit, that the working population of Brinkly died, more than one half of it, of sheer starvation; and at the same time tranquil and resigned, as daily epitaphs in journals say.

Miss Worksworth visited the ruins of Brinkly;—went down into its cellars, and mounted to its upper stories—seeing everywhere such samples of Christian resignation as wrung the heart with anguish. Strange to say! on these beds of martyrdom where the mother sinks amidst her pale and querulous children, and her husband's emaciated corpse stretched before her, Miss Worksworth, grieved as she was, would have rather seen a bolder spirit. She would have preferred seeing humanity assert its rights, though in violent and frantic fashion. She did not think it fair to employ

religion as a mere social opiate, and would have preferred the manhood of mutiny to the womanhood of such utter self-sacrifice.

Miss Worksworth, however, soon abandoned her principle of resistance, and her preference of impatient manhood for a Christian resignation, in visiting a town as ruined as Brinkly. Its operatives would listen to no compromise, were not to be beaten down by any fall of prices in foreign markets, or any distresses of trade. They said, with much reason, that the workman, in the flower of his age and the helplessness of his family, could not be left to starve, like a swallow through the winter, till trade came round again. This at least was the affair of capital, and should be its burden. It was fairly argued, but logic is of no avail against circumstances. Capital had its limit of tolerance and suffering, as well as labour; and it knows how to migrate better. The town was deserted, the operatives scattered; many leaving their families to the workhouse on departure. As to their religion, it was the Charter. What they received from their masters they took without gratitude. And the vindictive feeling was so strong that the gentry gave such strength of resistance to

their doors and windows as might be done without showing fear or exciting suspicion.

The visit of Miss Worksworth to —— was not prudently timed. It was a day which Mr. Dennis O'Dowd, and other patriotic gentlemen, had appointed for an open-air meeting of the inhabitants of Amersham, in order to discuss their grievances, and terminate, if it so pleased the assemblage, by signing a monster petition to parliament in favour of the Charter. Distressed and depopulated as was the town, the magistrates did not foresee any disturbance; and decided, as best, that Mr. O'Dowd should have an uninterrupted swing of oratory. He, however, took care to have a more imposing audience than Amersham could collect, summoning his partizans and admirers from neighbouring towns.

Miss Worksworth had visited several of her friends, who were employing their workmen at half time, without prospect of profit, but merely hoping to keep the iron machinery from rust, and the men machinery from starving and riot. They had made this day, however, a holiday in honour of the Charter; on telling which, the masters shrugged their shoulders in pity, not in terror. For Mr.

O'Dowd, though proud of sending round his hat in a popular audience, was anxious to keep that audience from any act that might send him to gaol, and interrupt the collection of his revenues as King of the Chartists. Like most of his countrymen, however, Mr. O'Dowd's eloquence sometimes ran away with his prudence, and awoke passions not to be gratified within legal or constitutional limits.

Miss Worksworth left a hundred pounds with the ministers of the two prevailing persuasions, and was returning homewards, the four horses of her equipage, requisite for a journey so long, creating an unusual sound and sensation in the town. The road skirted the common on which the meeting was held; and, strange to say, the apparition of a coach and four had attraction for the mob, powerful enough to divert it altogether from the orator of the moment. Angered, as well as put out by the interruption, he could not allow so natural and obvious a theme to escape him; and without knowing or caring who was the occupant of the coach, he launched into a tirade against the insolence and luxury of the aristocracy, which could not leave even the haunts of poverty and hunger in repose,

without coming to display before its eyes the painted panels, and velvet cushions, and gilded trappings of wealth.

Although a voice near the platform expostulated with the orator, saying, "I be a sadler, Master Dennis, and should like to see a few more of these turn-outs," the mob, nevertheless, took Mr. O'Dowd's view of the case, and rushed to the road to wreak some yet undefined vengeance upon the coach and four. Those who first approached it, seeing it occupied by females, let fall their arms, and confined their evil intentions to a growl. Those in advance, however, crowded so as to prevent the carriage passing, answering the postillions' remonstrances with gibes, and their efforts by actually seizing the reins. The horses, not respecting the crowd, were soon objects of execration, and, ere there was time for reflection, the traces of the leaders were cut, and the carriage brought to a compulsory stand-still in the midst of an inflamed and angry multitude. It now became apparent that it was a lady who was the object of their rudeness, and the better thinking cried *shame!* To which there was not wanting for response, such ejaculations as, "She can walk!" At last

it became known that it was Miss Workworth. The name was not popular; it had been worn by masters, just indeed, but severe; by a family, which had been driven from this part of the country by riots and the destruction perpetrated on them; and who, in consequence, had founded establishments elsewhere, which had competed with and ruined the more superannuated works and fashions of —shire. One of the largest properties in England had been amassed by their family. And though they had found labour in fortune, there were not wanting those who argued, that labour chiefly had created their wealth, and then had been cheated of any share in it.

By this time a rumour of what had happened reached the town, and numbers rushed to the rescue. Amongst the foremost of them was George Pevensey, who happened to be in the town and learned whose carriage it was; his strong arm pushed aside the crowd, and his voice acting as even a more powerful weapon to keep them back.

“Are ye Englishmen, to hurt a lady?” he cried; “or are ye to carry your points by fighting women?”

“No intention in life to fight or to hurt!” said a man. “Those are fools that cut the

traces. But now we know who it is, we want to know if the young lady will not sign the Working Man's petition."

"If it is for bread, or for work, or for short hours, or for ridding of any grievance, I will sign it," exclaimed Miss Worksworth. "But I will have nothing to do with politics, especially urged in this rude manner."

"What right have you to stop a person on the highway, in order to demand her opinion?"

"True," said the man; "but chance throws a rich person in our way; and we want to know what the rich intend to do. O'Dowd is putting us through the humbug of petitioning Parliament, which will fling our petition into the sink. We have a right to be heard; and we won't be heard, unless we make ourselves to."

"Print your petition."

"It is printed in letters of gold. And if the rich won't read, we'll print it in letters of fire!"

"No one more wishes that you should be heard and looked to than I. And what my opinions are I will go to yon scaffold and tell you. In the meantime let the lady depart. Even a question must be alarming to her in such a crowd. How can she be expected to utter a free sentiment? You have

done wrong, my friends; arrested with violence one of your own class, who, by the industry of her family, has become the equal in wealth and in power of the proudest of the land. And your first care is to insult her. For I warrant, if it were a Lord's carriage, with a coronet on the panels, you would have thrown up your caps and let it pass."

"It is a lie, and an affront!" exclaimed one of the people.

"I should like to think so," said Pevensey.

The reproach, severe, and perhaps unjust, had at least the effect of shaming the mob thoroughly; so that Pevensey was able to extricate the carriage, and set it rolling freely once more. He recommended, that it should proceed to his father's with a pair of horses, whilst the repairs necessary to its harness were made. Miss Worksworth was glad of the opportunity of visiting old Mr. Pevensey, and adopted the recommendation. George Pevensey straight proceeded to keep his word, by ascending the wagon which Mr. O'Dowd had used as a scaffold, and addressing the assemblage. This he did, but without making a convert, or removing one chaplet from the crown of Mr. Dennis O'Dowd.

CHAPTER V.

It was with a novel feeling of pleasure that Naomi found herself in the parlour of Mr. Pevensey's farm-house, enjoying *a tea*, more profuse in edibles, and more alive with the activity of preparing, than is usual even in an English abode. Mr. Pevensey's American brother had some time previously sent a daughter to her grandfather, in order to learn certain accomplishments and habits which might adorn and be useful to an agriculturist's wife, and which, he thought, could not be obtained in America. Little Rachel, however, seemed to have come with a determination rather to cram American habits and ideas down her English relatives' throats, than to adopt any of theirs. She was much the fastest person in the farm as its preceptor, and over-ruled, not only her guardian, but even her

aunt, Miss Pevensey, who, sometimes yielding, sometimes not, reclaimed her rights with a sharpness and determination that there was no resisting. Happily they agreed on the present occasion: Miss Pevensey doing all in her power to please and honour her wealthy guest from pure love and hospitality; Rachel rivaling her in the same firm zeal to uphold the honour of the house. She loaded the table with Transatlantic pastry, and a world of good things which the English tea-table knew not.

And yet Naomi could perceive, both outside and inside the homestead, symptoms of a decline in that prosperity, abundance, and life, which used to gladden her when a child. She had then no more delightful contrast than a change from the rigidity of her own nursery to the freedom of a farm. The increased dullness was, in one respect, owing to a natural cause. The generation of the young and merry had since grown up. But why had the labourers, who thronged round the kitchen-table at repast time, disappeared? There remained but two farm servants, male and female. Of the rest, one had broken his back, and gone from the hospital to the poor-house. Another had killed a hare, and was sent to

poach for other game at Sydney. A third had tried America. And their progeny? Lived in the loyal town of —, where the wives sought to earn pence independent of their husbands, who, in their turn, ate their bread and cheese at the beer-shop. The Duke would not allow of any more cottages. Then there were not only fewer human beings about the farm, but fewer quadrupeds. Naomi could perceive that they stood no longer so thick on the deep fodder of the farm-yard.

“No use in us, midlanders,” said Mr. Pevensey, “fattening more cattle than we and neighbours want. The droves that used to pass our doors, now fly over our heads by steam. The North supplies London, and they have thus got into the way of making beef, as Shuttlefield has of making cloth.”

“And losing by it?” asked George.

“That’s as the year may be. It’s all a lottery now, grazing or weaving,” said the old man despondingly.

“Give me the land,” said Rachel, “that has no markets, no rent, no poor-house, no tithe, and no landlords to forbid the building of cottages.”

“And where there is no clergyman, no

physician, no judge; where one must ride a hundred miles for an ounce of tea or of medicine; where every man is his own grocer, his own doctor, his own hangman."

"And his own master," said Rachel, interrupting Miss Pevensey.

George laughed. His father sighed, and remarked, that he remembered the time that he would not have borne to hear old England bearded, and sit still.

"And what can have made you faltering or disloyal," asked Naomi, "to the land of your birth?"

"I don't know, if it ben't the new-fangledness of the world," said Mr. Pevensey. "But everything old, calling or trade, goes downhill; and everything new rises up sky-high, like a balloon. Look at the railroads, and all the men upon them: they go a-coining, some with their shovels, some with their shares. What good is a farmer's pothering in such a time? He is a simpleton, a child, working by the rule of thumb, to scrape his rent and his profit from the man who can sell at the gain of a thousandth part of a farthing, can calculate the fraction, and make money: whilst the poor farmer makes just a guess at

his rent, and has then to make it out of weather and prices, such as the world never saw before. I tell you, Miss Worksworth, that a farmer must be treated as a child, with kindness, and with a large margin for his bad chances. If you put him on the footing people do men and men's labour, the farmer will disappear from the land."

"The old race of farmers will indeed," said George; "the farmer of the old English comedy. And so will the old squire, too. But land, as a raw material, will be worth working and paying for, though, I take it, the agriculturists who are to do it are not yet invented."

"That's another of my comforts, Miss Worksworth," said old Pevensey; "I have but one wise son, and he condemns me and my whole farming generation to be raked off like thistles."

"I should have given that bankrupt Duke his farm long ago," said George; "turned my stock into cash ten years ago, and in a small farm have weathered the storm that was coming, and learned how to deal with the times."

"Ay," said the old man, "that was George's advice. But I could not quit the old house,

and turn off the old men ; no, nor sell even the old team."

"A foolish kind of sentiment that," said George, "by which you lose. Commend me rather to the Squire's and to the Duke's sentiment, who cannot let the magnificence of his hall decline—sentiment forbids—and therefore cannot lower his rents. The landlords have been meeting the farmers year after year, and always give them the finest of sentiment. But they ask in return hard cash, and not a shilling the less of the rent per acre. And the farmer from sentiment drinks his landlord's health, and goes home damning Cobden—as if Cobden were anything but the mouth-piece of the million of non-agriculturists."

George's political lecture was interrupted by the servant's saying, as she replenished the ponderous kettle, that Maister Thad were without. The host looked to Miss Worksworth, as much as to say that Thad was no fitting company for a tea-table honoured with her presence. Naomi would of herself have protested against her chanced or forced visit being a restraint, or acting as exclusive of the habitual visitors of the house ; but the expression of Rachel's face, with a circuitous movement to

the door, showed the young girl interested in Thad's reception; and Naomi said, the more she saw of Mr. Pevensey's friends the more she would be pleased.

George Pevensey, however, heard welcome pronounced to the new visitor with extreme displeasure; and when he entered, led, or rather dragged in by Rachel, George's recognition of him was anything but friendly or cordial. Thaddeus, to whom the reader has been previously introduced, was a fine intelligent youth. Dealing in iron, not cotton, he seemed to partake of the material on which he worked, for his spirit rose under George Pevensey's frown, and he confronted even Rachel's uncle with a very full return of dislike and distrust.

"The Chartists of Amersham, under the generalship of Mr. O'Dowd, performed a brilliant feat to-day, Thaddeus," said Mr. Pevensey; "they cut the traces of this lady's carriage, and compelled her to take refuge with us."

"I was greatly vexed to hear so," said Thad, "and ran here to learn the truth; O'Dowd is a muff, that would cast ridicule on the best of causes."

"I do believe, indeed," observed George,

"that O'Dowd is the clown of the pantomime."

"Clown he may be, and worse I fear he is; but the discontent of the people around is more than a pantomime," said Thaddeus.

"The discontent is real enough, and has foundation enough. The pantomime is the making use of it to fill Mr. O'Dowd's hat. More serious evil it is, that one can get no steady work from the operatives of Shuttlefield."

"They would work steady enough if employment and wages were steady too."

"Employment and wages depend on sale and prices; what master is sure of these? The artizans are always bellowing against capital; but capital is not even so sure of profit as labour is of hire. Both must take their chance, and share their fate, in helping, not in advancing claims upon each other."

"So say I; let labour have its rights, and then let it respect the rights of the employer."

"What rights?"

"I have learned the folly of laying down abstract rights, like the French, who sacrifice seven thousand lives for some stupid article, which their rulers light their pipes with.

Rights spring up every day, and come of new positions. Let labour have a voice in the legislature, and be represented."

"Agreed," said Pevensey, "I'll not oppose it; but if your wish be heard, labour is to capital as a thousand to one, and to intelligence as ten thousand to one."

"That is the state of things to be remedied," said Thaddeus. "Why should labour be to capital as a thousand to one, because there are too great facilities for large capital, and too insurmountable obstacles for small? Why should ignorance be to intelligence as ten thousand to one, because intelligence is monopolized?"

"Every man is a capitalist in the States," said little Rachel, not shrinking from taking her share in political argument, "and the woodsman quite as intelligent as the lawyer."

"That does not prove much for the law," said Miss Worksworth.

The woodsman should be superior at Lynch law," said Miss Pevensey.

"Well," said George, "I have no objection to any theory, or any principle, go it to whatever length it may, provided it be fairly argued, and provided it be not

the object of private conspiracy, or public violence."

George Pevensey had no patience with that lesson of rebellion which we so ridiculously teach and admire at school, and so vehemently condemn when we leave school. George was a democrat, with more than an aristocrat's horror of the democratic excesses and liberticide licence of a mob; indeed he had good reason to abhor them. His father had purchased him a manufacturing establishment in Shuttlefield, a couple of years too soon. The old town was sinking. The number of paupers, and amount of poor-rates, the turbulence of the men who did work, the loose *morale* of a manufacturing population, without a check, infested it. The two or three most rich and enterprising masters, like Mr. Worksworth, left it; while there arose one year, in which the whole town was bankrupt, when there was neither money nor credit to carry on even the old business, much less undertake the improvements necessary to put the town, or its manufactures, on a par with others. The result was, that almost the whole of the master manufacturers were swept away. They had eaten their capital, lost it, or thought it swallowed up, they knew not

how; and a totally new race of men, with new manners, new ideas, and new capital, stepped into their places.

The world has been treated to many a harrowing picture of starving operatives; very true, no doubt, and unexaggerated. Irish famine beggared even that, and the distresses of Hibernian landlords were adduced as a fearful instance of affluence reduced to penury. We have never seen pictures drawn, or heard of pity spent on the manufacturers of Stockport or Shuttlefield, who, in a very short space of time were ejected from their mills which they had put up, and worked with ample capital; but which capital, both the fixed and the circulating, had melted away in the progress of invention and the backwardness of markets, in such a way that all their ingenuity could not detect, nor all their industry counteract. Old Mr. Pevensey was wont to argue that farming tenants deserved particular consideration; for they might be ruined before they were aware, arithmetic not being applicable to their business; but the weaver's gains are not more exempt than the plough from the mistake of the sanguine owner, and the success of the go-a-head competitor. And

when numerous heads of families of the middle class are flung down from their position, their capital annihilated, and their families reduced to beggary, such victims to fortune suffer more, perhaps, than the outcast of high life, or the destitute of low. The former find something to recline upon ; their very rank and education suggest other means of life and earnings. The destitute poor are accustomed to struggle with poverty ; but your capitalist, who has never worked with hand nor with head, and to whom money has been the very instrument of his trade, he undergoes a ruin the most irreparable to himself, and the most fearful to his family.

In George Pevensey's idea, therefore, capital was exposed to as many bad chances as labour ; and he resented, as an injustice, that envy borne by the latter to the former, which the French, with their usual exaggeration and wrong-headedness, have worked up into a kind of religion of hatred. He had indeed escaped the general wreck, having been but a late purchaser ; and he was affected more by the decay of his house, than by the competition of large capitalists and new improvements. No wonder that the foundation of his

opinions consisted of a large stratum of private discontent. This, animating a patriotic and intelligent man, made Pevensey eloquent—as he found, when it so chanced that he addressed a room or a crowd. He had eloquence indeed, but he found no plaudits for it in Shuttlefield. There he had not the sympathies of the people, for whom he was too much of the master; nor had he the sympathy of the masters, for whom he was too liberal. But in other places, of a more prosperous and less political population, with less of the old leaven of Toryism and Radicalism in them, Pevensey was listened to as one of the best orators of the district. It is remarkable, indeed, that celebrities of this kind of the manufacturing class do not shine in their own town, and are not popular in their own county. Whilst, remove them a few miles off from local prejudice, and old personal appreciations, and they are soon received at their just value, and are encouraged to self-development. If men were forced to choose an inhabitant of their own native town to represent them, the choice would infallibly fall upon a wealthy man, or a dull man of importance. A little society never worships its own talent, of which it sees too closely the

flaws. And hence, perhaps, so much nullity in our representative assemblies.

The success of George Pevensey, however, did not amount to a following that would render likely his return to Parliament—at least, unless he laid himself out for such a course, and took the requisite measures to become a politician. From this he shrunk, aware of the small profit attending it, and knowing consequently that Parliament was a pain and a luxury, which no poor man could inflict upon himself, or indulge himself in. He therefore applied himself more resolutely to business, and became often self-indignant to find how much more a strong public question, really indifferent to his personal interests, affected and excited him, than one vital to his income and commercial success. It is with politics, however, as with literature, there is a calling for them; and, in that case, a fascination in them which no prudence can resist. And, whilst the vulgar attribute the step of the man who starts from private into public life, and chooses the latter as a profession—whilst the world sets him down as a fool, or a cunning adventurer, he is, in all probability, one who follows an impulse as blindly as the boy that

enlists, or quits a comfortable drawing-room to engage before the mast.

It is a common reflection made, how much happier the world is, than it used to be ! how much more free, more enlightened, more full of pleasure—of objects of interest, of comfort—and how rare is cruelty and oppression ! The Inquisition done away with—torture and the stake—even pestilence and accidents abated ! Yes, no doubt ; and modes of enjoying life have vastly increased, and the chances for shortening life, and inflicting bodily torture, have as vastly diminished. But in return, the moral pains of life, and the uncertainty of subsistence, has in an equal proportion increased. In the old time, things and men's fortune might progress slowly ; still, the fortunes of all did progress. There was no class swept away—no crop of men cut down by the might of advancing civilization, to make way for another crop. There were no epochs of transition, which demanded coolly, under the name of improvement, the holocaust of a generation. There were no machines, that immortalized the inventor and enriched his tribe, while impoverishing hundreds of thousands. There was no great abundance—no great

wealth then ; but the agriculturist was hopeful in his farm, the shopman behind his counter, the artizan on his working stool.

Here, before Miss Worksworth, was the most melancholy of sights—an entire family, of different ages and callings, all unhappy, all disappointed, all uncertain of the future, and ill ensured of comfortable subsistence. The old man, that had tilled and reaped for half a century ; the man engaged in one of England's staple manufactures, as a capitalist and a master ; the workman who laboured for his daily hire ; and the women who tended on, and shared in, the wants and anxieties of these men, were all unhappy—all conscious of a decline in their state, all looking to the future with anxiety. Even the children had their youthful hopes dashed with care—as if a cloud hung over what once was merry England—and that cloud fraught with care, discontent, and destitution !

The most painful part was, perhaps, the mutual distrust and dislike, even amongst those whom circumstances brought together. Old Pevensey beguiled his despondency, for a moment, with the thought, that the heiress cast a look of interest upon his son. He was

mistaken. Naomi respected George Pevensey, and bethought her how the sinking fortunes of his family could be sustained. But ideas of deeper interest did not cross her mind; and if she felt any admiration it was for the bold, dark, and intelligent spirit of Thaddeus, who evidently looked to remedying the existing ills of society by some violent and heroic remedy—such were the leading ideas in his mind; whereas George Pevensey was religiously resigned to fate, and philosophy, and to the decrees of political economy. Thaddeus pleaded that association was not conspiracy; but George Pevensey shook his head. He well knew the young artizan was a leading man in a certain association in Shuttlefield; and that this association, whilst it professed to follow out the ends of Chartism by the fair means of pacific argument and open meetings, nevertheless met and fomented secretly, and heard and fostered the most dangerous proposals, and the most invidious designs against other classes. George, therefore, notwithstanding the acknowledged ability and industry of Thaddeus, disapproved of his being received as the lover of Rachel, and thought his father weak to allow it. Rachel, however,

had a will of her own, stronger than that of either uncle or grandsire; and she had been taught to consider any censure or prohibition of this kind, as an invasion of her rights, and an act of tyranny, that could be practised nowhere but in the old country of tyranny and oppression.

Naomi was amazed and startled at this young couple of lovers, who looked to the work of their hands for life, and yet had a spirit, and an aim, and political and social views, fierce, and fixed, and lively and proud, as if they were the lords of the creation. And such lords they were, far more than the stripling of birth, and his delicate bride, whose sole superiority lay in the courtesy of others, not in their own intrinsic worth. Civilized man, when he penetrates into primeval wilds, generally finds the savage inhabitants of them noble, both in bearing and in mind. He may often behold the same in the energetic and working man of his own country, when he is a good specimen of his class, and yet unbroken by those many chances of life, which do weigh down the poor man more than they do the rich.

“And do you intend to emigrate to the

land you praise so much?" asked Miss Worksworth.

"I have no choice of my own left," replied Thaddeus, looking to Rachel. "But of my own self, and my own will, I would not desert the land that loves me; I think it cowardly to do so."

"Old England will not want a champion," said Rachel, "and some may come to it at last from the other side of the Atlantic, if they cannot produce any at home."

"May England never have other champions than the wielders of tongues and pens!" said Pevensey.

"Had Hampden never wielded but a goose quill," said Thaddeus, "what an old woman's tale would have been the English history!"

"In those times there were no means of resisting, but with iron," said George. "But now, a man is a barbarian and a murderer, who would dare to fight for a political right, in a country where it can be claimed and won by argument."

"I don't think that mere argument ever did much."

"It has at least done all that was required of it."

"Did argument carry reform? Has argument alone repealed the corn-laws? Were not these results attained by threats?"

"No doubt, the moral force of multitudes."

"Moral, indeed," said Thaddeus, "that is a cant word, that can be made to mean anything."

"When wealth and intelligence join numbers in a demand, you may call that moral."

"They are not always truly moral agents," rejoined Thaddeus. "But suppose wealth and intelligence claimed monopoly of power, and the multitude find themselves injured by the monopoly, of what use then, moral resistance against wealth and talent?"

"They would be of little use. But it would be of less use to prevail over wealth and intelligence by brute force and numbers. For ruin and disorder could only come of it, and tyranny alone come of them."

Thaddeus shook his head. He dealt in other theories, and held fast in them. The master and the operative could not agree; and yet in this instance they respected one another. Their feud was one of class; and Naomi saw with regret, that not even the tie, or prospects of family and affection, could obliterate them.

CHAPTER VI.

NAOMI took advantage of a bright English morning, to re-contemplate old views. The chimneys and house rows had increased to the dimming of the atmosphere; but cottages had not multiplied. The once rural village added a cubit to its stature; had, in fact, grown another storey—had lost all the beauty of rusticity, without attaining the neatness and prosperity of town.

“George, your father is not so happy, I fear, nor so prosperous as he deserves to be,” said Naomi.

“There is no way of life without its struggles, no age without its sufferings and sorrows.”

“But age has its own peculiar griefs and burdens, and should be spared those anxieties of worldly life, easily overcome in manhood, but too painful and humiliating for grey hairs to contend with.”

"I have done everything to spare these to my father; but he takes a soldier's view of his duty, and thinks this a kind of post, where he is bound to die, and whence it would be dishonourable to withdraw."

Miss Worksworth proceeded to observe, that land could be rendered profitable to owner and occupier. No doubt, it required increased skill and capital. The last she could place at Mr. Pevensey's disposal, if she knew how to do so with delicacy. Or, perhaps, land on other conditions, and a better aspect, would suit him. Pevensey, however, seemed coldly and determinately to decline all such hints and offers. His father was obstinate; he sunk his own capital, and would let additional funds disappear in the same way. Farming to him was what he described as a lottery—a gaming-table, to which he clung while he lost, and hoped, and clung to future chances. George Pevensey had resources enough to prevent any catastrophe. After first losses, farming concerns were more stationary, and might be kept from further decline.

This was, of all others, the conversation most displeasing to George Pevensey. His father's position could not be bettered or

changed. A topic less personal and sad might have led to the awakenment of old affectionate feelings and reminiscences. But these actually turned and led away from it. Pevensey's feelings of pride were aroused, and he gave Naomi at length to understand, that the family wanted and would accept no aid of any kind.

"Indeed," said Naomi, somewhat piqued "I did not sufficiently consider your own brilliant prospects. Every one is loud in praise of your sound judgment, sterling eloquence. Every one sees the doors of the senate open to you, and plaudits of admirers welcoming you within."

"My friends, then, are far more ambitious for me, than I am for myself. I could not afford to run that costly race, even were it open to me. I am not naturally ambitious and feel that there is but one thing that could induce me to enter upon the exertions and struggles of public life."

"That one thing, what is it?"

"Disappointment in my aims at private and domestic happiness. Give me my own hearth with that which could alone illumine it for me and I should shun even a senator's applause."

as a mere vulgar enjoyment. Deny me the heart and the home I prize, and then, as disappointed people of old sought the cloister and its trials, so should I rush to the popular meeting, the hustings, and the House of Commons."

"If ever you become politician, then," said Naomi, with rather cold mirth, "it would be in despite for the insensibility of your lady-love."

"It will, Naomi; and I never felt a stronger impulse to fling myself into political life than I do this moment."

"This moment!"

"Yes, for had I set my heart on a lady-love, and it answered me in tones like yours, it would drive me to a desperate resolve."

"She must be a dull and a selfish goddess who would bar you the way, instead of crowning you, to eminence and success."

"Happiness, then, you identify with being successful and great?"

"One can be happy with any fate rationally adopted, irrevocably assigned. But to feel an aspiration and not follow it, is to lay by such a store of remorse as must kill all happiness."

" You are ambitious, then ?"

" Me !"

" And admire the ambitious ?"

" I admire the soarer certainly more than the slumberer."

" So soon a woman of the world !"

" Has nature given a bird wings, whilst denying that it should use them ? Has Providence given me fortune, in order that I should not stand upon the eminence which it has raised beneath my feet ?"

Pevensey said nothing, but his look plainly spoke that he had never imagined a woman with such tastes and views as these.

" We shall meet in London," said Miss Worksworth, as they approached the house.

" Should it be so, it will not be more surprising to me than this conversation."

An exaggerated report of the rudeness offered to Miss Worksworth by the turbulent people of ———, assembled under the presidency of Denis O'Dowd, was the occasion of a great many unexpected visits and acquaintances. One of these brought another ; and each and all of the parties which were then disputing influence in especial counties and boroughs, or in the kingdom at large,

sought to drag the heiress into one current or another. The visit most spoken of was that of Mr. Poyntz and Bishop Stromboli to Highlands, a visit which was followed by the heiress being entertained at Poyntztett, a new and wonderful event for its classic halls and walls.

Even Shuttlefield, that disliked both notabilities, was touched by the approximation. And although the malignant sneered at an understanding between the new wealth of yesterday and the mouldering riches of the last century, others, however democratic, seemed pleased that Poyntztett should so renovate itself, people its terraces with life, and its domains with improvements. Popular imagination runs post-haste forward with such suppositions, whilst reality is very snail-paced. Yet Mr. Poyntz never expected to find so much grace as well as beauty emanate from a mill, and so much intelligence from a sectarian education. Bishop Stromboli was gratified to hear her admit, that there could not be a natural or a universal religion which confined itself to the middle class, and could neither satisfy the rich, nor fascinate the poor. And although this was counteracted by the

addition, that the religion was equally unsatisfactory which inspired a middle and industrious class with repulsion, still the Bishop hoped to demonstrate to Miss Worksworth that *his* Church was not in this category.

Naomi knew enough of the Duke's circumstances and position not to be touched by the latter. She saw nothing in his bearing to warrant those complaints of his Grace's pride, which had been wont to accompany the mention of his name. Both he, and his grandson, and their friends, indeed, seemed to assume, that to uphold or resuscitate the influence of the family, was the first of all earthly wants, the key of all philosophy, and the aim of every effort. Naomi regretted such narrowness, though she excused it; but thought it more pardonable in the aged noble than in the youth, fresh from the studies and aspirations of the University.

Mr. Poyntz thought, very naturally, that the fate of the country and of mankind were intimately bound up with the fall of his order. For this he had other than selfish reasons. He had excellent philosophic ones to give, which took away the reproach of narrowness or selfishness from his own conscience or self.

appreciation. But to the observer it was plain that Poyntztett was the centre of his ideal, as well as his real world; and that he could view the most remote parts of the horizon only through the atmosphere and under the shadow of the ducal residence.

Miss Worksworth found that Mr. Poyntz did not regard the monied and industrious classes, as half a century before he might have done, with contempt. He looked upon them with jealousy and fear. He deemed that, however honest, and sensible, they would vulgarize society, give meaner aims to public men, and make of the State a mere trade, unless counteracted by men of higher education, of higher hereditary sentiments, and of minds ennobled by the intellectuality of leisure. He abandoned, however, the reestablishment or rather the continuance of aristocratic ascendancy by force of law, but he still thought it might be done by the force of cajolery. To the great astonishment of Miss Worksworth, Mr. Poyntz expressed no indignation against the operatives, nor against Mr. O'Dowd. "Power," he said, "must reside with the people, and had always resided with them: but they could never exercise it. They could

delegate it, and they always had delegated it by the loyal attachment and trust which they had ever reposed in those whom wealth and birth had constituted their superiors. The middle class throughout the west of Europe had come to interfere with and to dispute this ascendancy, and claim the suffrage and the trust of the lower order for themselves. They had succeeded, but in succeeding had only produced tyranny and revolution. To restore the reign of the true aristocracy over the true people was Mr. Poyntz's millennium.

Naomi seemed almost a convert from her quiet acquiescence in those doctrines, which she did not think it becoming in her to dispute. She merely wished to set George Pevensey's ideas to flash upon those of Mr. Poyntz, viewing, as they did, the moral and political world from two different centres; and these, though by no means the antipodes of each other, were both of them marked by strong and mutual repulsion.

But, if it had here been Naomi's delight to set Mr. Pevensey and Mr. Poyntz to dispute, it was by no means with the desire to act either umpire or witness. Her zeal and her reverence of political knowledge had greatly

evaporated. She had met with mere perplexity and disgust. And her secret desire already was to return or to escape into life,—that life of general interest and conversation, of which politics formed a part, but did not absorb the whole. How to do this she knew not well; but an invitation to spend some time at a mansion in a more northern county, offered, at least, the prospect of company and the charm of the *inconnu*.

And yet it must have struck her, that even this invitation originated in political views. It had not escaped the Whig Divan, that the Duke of Armington and his grandson, their public opponents, had paid court to the heiress of Worksworth,—perhaps paid court to her with other than political views. The influence of great mercantile fortunes, so lately and magically raised, belonged naturally to them,—the liberal aristocracy. The aims of the heir of Poyntztett were considered unfair. They were to be counteracted, and of course by equal condescension, and by similar efforts. The aristocratic world around Highlands had been unremitting in their attention. Naomi met amongst them the females of the great family of Merton. She was charmed by their

intelligence—their simplicity ; knowing the world as the atmosphere in which they lived, neither the knowledge of it, nor the consciousness of their importance in it, seemed to create the slightest difference of demeanour in them, from what it might have been in the most secluded bower. Friendship, indeed, was out of the question, with persons who weigh their words, measure their advances, who cannot take a step without consequences, or cast a look without causing an emotion. But the necessary artifice was covered over with such a gloss of the natural, that Naomi, won by it, was induced to wave an internal resolution that she had formed, not to be enticed into the circles of rank, and she consented to become a guest at Mertons.

It was no little delight to emerge, for the first time, from the region of factory and smoke—to traverse roads unblackened by the refuse of the furnace—and to observe a population of ruddiness unbegrimed, and of looks not so acutely and painfully bent upon their industry. Not but that if the two populations, rustic and manufacturing, were clearly weighed and compared, the drawbacks upon comfort, intelligence, and perfect manhood, might be found

pretty equal. But for the young to emerge from the dingy artisan world, into the more sparkling and verdant, though more solitary region of genuine agriculture, is a pleasure not to be disputed. Mertons, however, was not situated in a purely agricultural district. In its different localities flourished the great staple of England, the woollen manufacture. The loom, however, was a loving brother of the plough, and could settle by its side without annoying it, and without making the earth a furnace and the sky a cloud.

Of far greater dimensions than Poyntztett, Mertons had none of its pretensions. It was a large country mansion, with a tower, and slightly castellated, but with nothing of the feudal or the Norman about it. Its beauty lay in its position, and its so perfectly suiting the mingled region of hill, water, and forest, in which it was situated. The Earl, its owner, could boast an indirect descent from many great names. But his true pride was in his family having been, for almost a century, at the head of the great liberal interest in the North.

Having himself come into public life at a time when Tory hostility to France could alone procure the countenance of the sovereign, and

when to be a Whig was to be set aside as a rebel, Lord Merton resented the stigma thrown upon his party, with a vehemence of language unknown to our more temperate habits. In these times, too, the representation of the county had been taken from him by the mingled cant of loyalty and of religion. Those who pretended to monopolize the guardianship of Church and State, and to possess exclusive reverence for them, were not men, who by either truth, talent, eloquence, or wisdom, were entitled to claim the exclusive privilege. And such unjust preference and such unfounded pretensions, had drawn almost to the verge of disaffection, at least in language, some of the staunchest and oldest of the Whig nobility.

Since then, however, the days of the Earl's youth, the world had turned round, bringing, in some respects, the antipodes to the zenith. For that same supremacy in his county, which had been torn from him by the Pittites, and which he had recovered by that natural revulsion, following upon the close of the war, was now taken from him, as an aristocrat, liberal indeed, but not sufficiently advanced for the time. Hence, a singular testiness of humour in the good Earl, an adherence to the old liberal

principles of his party, but with exceptions and with crotchets as to both persons and things, scarcely squaring with these principles.

But the love of local and political influence, which was the hereditary passion of the family of the Mertons, was biassed by no desire for higher rank, or lucrative office. They were no traders in politics, like the Duke of Arming-ton, and like many Whig as well as Tory grandees ; but, knights-errant from father to son, as disinterested as the Knight of La Mancha, and sometimes quite as odd. Naomi was quite delighted with the Earl, the more so as he talked no politics to her, and seemed to have not an object but to please and entertain her, allowing any influence upon her opinions to do its work, imperceptibly and tacitly. Social questions were not the order of the day at Mertons ; and local matters and interests did not fill every thought. Literature, the arts, the private life of contemporaries and friends, viewed and judged with interest, but without malignity, formed the natural staple of female conversation, and opened to Naomi that world of ideas for which she had sighed ; amidst which the mind could repose from business and from care, from political strife

and social enigmas, and religious difficulties and doubts.

The guests and inmates at Mertons were of all kinds of tastes and pursuits ; the sportsman was even more common than the statesman,—and at times they were blended in one. The name of Delmer she heard of as a respected and welcome guest. Every one was delighted at his coming. He was so agreeable, had such spirits, and such wit, with not a grain more malice than wit required, and not a scruple of malignity. Naomi had never met any one thus socially renowned, and intellectually looked up to ; and worked herself accordingly into a complete terror of Charles Delmer, who fell nevertheless as quietly into his chair at the dinner-table (for he came late) as if his purpose were to belie the flourish of trumpets that heralded him ; nor did he venture a remark, much less a jest, until every one had forgotten the novelty of his presence. .

Having thus dived, as it were, beneath the general surface of the society, he re-appeared in quiet remark and soft-toned converse ; diffusing a gayer and happier spirit throughout it, without its being necessary to trace the causes to him. Charles Delmer's was a most

intellectual countenance, not regularly handsome; the forehead took the greater part of the expanse of the face to itself, and somewhat overwhelmed and controlled the rest. It was neither the Roman nor the Grecian chisel that had carved his features or the outline of his face. But the expression was noble, and at once sarcastic and good-natured, as taking a comic not a malignant view of things. His smile of mockery, however, like his University jargon, had gradually worn away as he matured into manhood; and his comrades were wont to remark, how grave Charles Delmer had become; whilst society thought him quite merry and genial enough, with more sense and acuteness in his conversation.

Charles was the younger son of a good family, with a very small fortune. His father increased his means, when in health and life, by holding high official place in the colonies. He died there, and left a large family, in providing for which his means had been exhausted. Charles was the last; and all that could be done for him, was left to his mother's exertions. But she was a wonderful woman—a queen in form, as well as in heart and in ambition; a woman of the world too—not the

less virtuous for that, or of less lofty sentiments. She provided Charles with emulation, and spirited him to effort. As St. Simon had a valet whose daily duty it was to awaken him with the injunction, "Get up, Monsieur de St. Simon, you are born to do great things," so Charles Delmer's mother dinned the same into her son's waking ears; so that the young mind was always on the spur. Perhaps this was the veritable cause of his great success at the University, his having such an incomparable flapper in his surviving and cherished parent.

If she made Charles a wrangler, she also made him a politician. The family seat, though let, and the family property, though dwindled away, was near a borough that for years had elected a Delmer; since the Reform, or even before it, there was no reason why it should continue to do so. The Delmers had no power, no property, no money; yet such were her influence, and winning ways, and the respect borne to Mrs. Delmer, that the borough returned her young son to Parliament, without a bribe, or a threat, or a base motive. There are noble boroughs, as well as rotten ones!

Charles was full of the tenderest gratitude

to his mother and to his constituents. But it was a deep subject of regret to him to have been thus early pushed into the front ranks of public life, without an assured independence, and consequently condemned to that most disastrous and painful of callings, the pursuit of politics as a profession. He was at the bar, no doubt, but attorneys would not employ the young lawyer, who was condemned to pass his nights in the House of Commons, and who, instead of reading briefs, devoted his time to the getting up political subjects. Subordinate place, too, was as irreconcilable with his position, as important office with his inexperience and youth. So that he was absolutely obliged to eke out the principal of his little patrimony in order to keep up position and appearance, until the several circumstances of his friends being in office, his renown, his being talented, his being able to retain his seat, and his acquirement of years and weight, should combine to induce a Liberal Premier to seat him on some extreme of the ministerial bench.

What a mountain of cares and disappointments was thus flung on the heart of the unfortunate young man! Full of the noblest aspirations, the most generous sentiments, the

largest views, all were required to be rendered subordinate to the narrow prudence of professional politics. The public at the time was go-a-head wild for progress; and he that held back was trampled down and forgotten. And yet the heads of the Liberal party looked with an evil eye upon any one who did push too far ahead, and who ventured to occupy too conspicuous a place in public opinion. With no more than tolerance within the Lords, lukewarmness in the Church, dubious trust in the upper ranks of commerce, whilst all that lived by land were necessarily hostile to them, the great Whig leaders considered it dangerous to propose any step of liberal movement, except in a material or free-trade direction. To volunteer, or venture forward, on other topics might be a recommendation to constituencies, but a bar to office.

A more unhappy young man than Delmer, therefore, could not well be found. His poor mother had unwittingly imposed upon him an Herculean task, without the physical strength that such a wear and tear of mind required. His health had already given him secret warning that it would sink under the labour and the burden, unless both were lightened.

Delmer heard the warning, and added it to the rest of the anxieties and distractions which beset a career that filled him with disquietude, whilst the world considered it a brilliant one, and thousands envied him.

Half a century back a man in such a position would have flown to dissipation. The bottle and the gambling-table were the strong excitements that even such men as Pitt and Fox did not shrink to have recourse to, in order to lull, or counteract by physical excitement, the intellectual exhaustion and sore worry of politics. In the present age it is only the unintellectual that have recourse to brutish excitement; and if there had been progress in nothing else, this alone would be immense. Charles liked society, and shone in it; this was his only dissipation, and its enjoyments were the solace and business of his life.

Charles Delmer was a great favourite with the womankind at Mertons, as elsewhere. He was one of those, with whom the softer sex can converse with security and pleasure. He was no male coquet; he limited his efforts to pleasing for the time, and passing it. He eschewed all that savoured of the romantic or

the sensitive, and put on a sarcastic smile if conversation ever approached it. Yet he by no means affected the reverse, avoided politics as much as sentiment, and would hide a conversation on political economy, as carefully as a professor would a light volume. Too well bred to allow any one of so familiar a party to be an exception in the general attention, he frequently addressed Miss Worksworth. But it was upon one or other of those omnibus topics, of which she alone of all the world was ignorant.

"I was never at the opera," she replied to him on one occasion. "The hair on my mother's head would have stood erect, had one talked to her of a playhouse. I know Shakspeare, but by stealth, and I have yet the A, B, C of your interesting world to learn."

"It must be original to peruse and study it for the first time, when possessed of judgment and independence. You cannot have the same taste for trifles, or the same indulgence for follies, as others around us," said Charles.

"It seems to me quite the contrary," said Naomi; "the seriousness of my youth, and the few objects presented to my mind, have

given quite a thirst for pleasure and for novelty. You put down Mertons, you say, as very quiet. Yet I am quite excited by its easy gaiety."

"Society is an exciting thing. Other eyes upon one, one's own eyes looking into others, is alone an excitement, independent of the interests that society awakens and the passions it inspires."

"I feel it so already. What then is to become of me, if society were to stir up what you call passions? What are passions exactly? pray tell me what you mean by them."

"I could count you scores,—ambition, for example,—rivalry, jealousy, pride, vengeance, without any more tender torments."

"An empty vocabulary for me. To please, to be pleased, to do one's duty, are objects sufficient for me. Some time back I had higher objects,—ambition you will call them, or passions, perhaps. But I feel almost, if not altogether cured."

"It could not have been very profound; and therefore was perhaps wisely eradicated."

"I must not let you suppose it other than it was. It was the desire to do a great deal of good, to turn the use of wealth and

influence to better the condition of the wretched."

"There are the wretched of all kinds and classes."

"Well, I mean the destitute."

"England expends annually seven or eight millions on feeding the destitute, and does not succour the half of those."

"Nay, I would confine myself to my own district, work by example, and try to remove that insecurity of life, that alternation of starvation and employ."

"Pardon me, Miss Worksworth; but the easy class—those assured of daily and yearly sustenance—are a very small fraction of any community. To earn, and get one's daily bread, be thankful for it each day, and not be certain of it the next, is the lot of humanity."

"But there are degrees of insecurity, as there are depths of depression, to the extreme of which it is horrible and dangerous to drive a population."

"No doubt, too, the first person whom the danger threatens is the employer; and he is sagacious enough to look to it. Public attention should be upon him, and he should feel it as well. One way or other, society will solve

the difficulty, But no one philanthropist can—by imagining a theory or a panacea—altogether remove an ill which is part of our nature.”

“You think, then, I am right, not to take up philanthropy as a profession?”

“Decidedly; although to become impassioned for some great principle or cause, is the way to one kind of illustration and eminence.”

“My wish would be to avoid notoriety; yet one would like to have some nobler aim than the mere duties and pleasures of private life.”

“Life does, indeed, want some poetry infused into it; but youth will take care to do that.”

“When you know Mr. Delmer better, Miss Worksworth,” joined in one of the Lady Mertons, “you will perceive that he condemns women to make lace and embroidery; and that he reserves for gentlemen the exclusive privilege, not only of being heroes, and statesmen, and poets, but of judging and appreciating them.”

Charles demurred against this accusation.

"Women," he said, "made the better part of the audience, though it was reserved for men to be the actors."

"Believe not a word of it," rejoined Lady Louisa; "Parliament is a complete convent of monks, which thinks of no other public than each other. Beyond the convent chapels, which are their true homes, and the clubs, which are their refectories, they care for nothing. Fortune, character, pride, and place, are won and decided amongst themselves. Twice a week, perhaps, they deign to visit the circles where women mingle, but with an air so *distrain* and condescending, that they seem more like gods who have strolled from Elysium down amongst mortals, than men mingling with their mates and relatives."

"Do you know of no politicians," asked Charles, "whose wives are more politicians than themselves?"

"Parliamentary females; oh, certainly, several."

"Then you condemn the men for not associating women with them in public life; and the poor women who do so devote their tastes, you make the subject of mockery."

"Even so ; and yet for all that I say, I am certain, Mr. Delmer, that you will make your wife a politician."

"And why so ?"

"Because politics form your inner life—the lighter topics and generalities of society, your outer life. A man of business at home, you are but a man of pleasure abroad."

"Keep anything in reason, indeed, from women," said Charles, "when they know more about us than we do ourselves."

CHAP. VII.

NAOMI WORKSWORTH was not long in discerning how she could reconcile her reluctance to put herself personally forward, in matters of public and serious interest, with a determination to employ her influence and power to the furtherance of some nobler purpose than the gratification of her own luxury and pride. Reared so totally a stranger to the vanities and coquetries of life, she was not subjugated by any of the usual weaknesses of the female heart. She was not inclined to consider George Pevensey as a lover, because she had known him from boyhood; because his attachment was as manifest as his worth, and the pride which buoyed up his heart a highly honourable feeling. Neither was there any repugnance toward him, springing from his being unlearned in the ways of gentility; and, without a weakness for refinement or for

fashion, her mind refused to entertain any ideas for or against.

Mr. Poyntz's attentions had, on one or two occasions, been more marked. But the glittering coronet, if contemplated with even but a side glance, was an object of terror, not of *convitise*, to Naomi. She had not, for the present at least, the ambition of launching out in the world, and was too uneasy in the position that fortune had assigned her, and too anxious as to how the best and most religious use could be made of it, to desire an additional state of elevation, or further claims to grandeur. If the idea of an alliance crossed the brain of Mr. Poyntz, he no doubt considered himself conferring an honour and a distinction; and, though it was fair and natural that he should, the idea was not pleasing. The greatness, the character, the political success, if achieved, came secured to Mr. Poyntz with his birth, and made of him a fit idol for the world to worship, and for vanity to fall in love with—even very sensible and rational vanity. But Naomi was romantic, without ever having read romance, and she wanted a hero—the maker of his own destinies, the creator of his own ideas, the achiever of his

own greatness—to whose lamp she could bring some precious oil, sparing his mental powers that lone struggle for bread, at the same time as for laurels, which vulgarizes genius. This she could bring; but this was but an accessory to a career brilliant without it; more tedious and painful if deprived of it, yet not absolutely needing it for success. Poyntztett could not be restored without millions, millions that the Poyntzes could never strike by the magic blow of genius, from the soil. Charles Delmer might be a prime minister, and sleep in Westminster Abbey, without more wealth than Pitt, more power than Fox, more independence than Canning. Thus did Naomi *monter la tête*, as the French express it—wind up her enthusiasm, as we can but badly translate it. And thus did her young soul form for itself its first great necessity—an imaginative idol.

Singular to say, the very thing that Naomi did not think upon, was that combination of circumstances which could alone change her dream into reality; in other words, that Charles Delmer should reciprocate towards her that idolatrous feeling, which she began to experience and to cherish for a character such as

his might be. But Charles was no love-maker. He knew how his position narrowed his scope in this respect. He durst not pretend to the rich, and could not espouse the poor. Like a Turkish sovereign, therefore, he strangled at the birth each affection that his weakness, or tenderness, or enthusiasm gave rise to, in order to keep alive the one male thought of political ambition, which was to be at once his sceptre and his realm. His bosom friend from schoolhood up, Jacobi, had escaped from most of the difficulties of a similar position, by espousing a widow, very rich, and much his senior. Yet it was neither an unhappy, nor an ill-assorted marriage. The example was not such as to deter. In Jacobi it left no regrets, and implied no debasement. But Charles Delmer could not have done it—not to save himself from the most utter shipwreck that fate could award him. As little was he heiress-hunter, as widow-wooer, and so careful was he in this respect, as in all relating to the sex, that the gay and witty Lady Louisa Merton called him, at times, *Monsieur l'Abbé*, so much, as she said, did he resemble that singular and most regrettably defunct personage of French memoirs.

And yet it was precisely Lady Louisa's suggestion to her mother, that had brought Charles Delmer to Mertons, at the time that Miss Worksworth was expected. It was no older head than hers, which had devised this little plan of giving Charles a chance of fortune. Charles half suspected it, which rendered him still more shy of thrusting his head into so good-natured a trap.

"We have no county amusements to offer you, Miss Worksworth," said the Earl; "since these deuced railroads have been opened, London monopolizes pleasure as well as business, and men come down here for absolute repose. Nevertheless, you must visit some of our manufactories. Our *prolétaires* here are far less numerous, and therefore more manageable than yours. I believe, too, there are less fluctuations in the trade. So that masters can manage better for themselves, and not be always driven from philanthropy by economy. What with improved abodes, schools, libraries, and institutions, all that have the least wish or intelligence among the operatives, have now the means at their disposal of acquiring and prizing comfort and mental cultivation more than formerly."

The Earl accordingly went with Miss Workworth, and some of her family, to the flourishing town of —, very different in aspect from Shuttlefield and its melancholy neighbours, and equally different in the reception given to the gentry of the county, when business or interest, as on the present occasion, brought them within its precincts.

The Earl had chosen, however, what for him was an unlucky day. There were electioneering preparations there as elsewhere, it being evident that the great obstacle in the way of opening the trade in corn could not be removed during the duration of the present Parliament. There, indeed, no one dreamed of setting up in opposition to a candidate on the ground of agricultural protection. The population which lived by wages derived from capital was too overwhelming. And cheap bread, amidst a threatening famine, was a cry, that if awakened and opposed, would carry everything before it. A friend of the minister stood. Though somewhat of an intruder, the Whigs shrank from opposing, and the resistance was got up solely by his ultra-religion. The vote to Maynooth, and godless education, supplied the Tory artillery with ammunition. There was a meeting

on the very day, to hear the candidates or their friends. It was what the Earl desired especially to avoid. But to be in the town, and take no part in it, was unpopular. The free-trade candidate had been kept away by illness. His place and his cause were badly supplied and served. The parson-power was in thundering force, and some liberal citizen, seeing the Mertons equipage, summoned its occupants to the rescue. There was no refusing. The gentlemen were pressed into the hall of meeting; the officious landlady, knowing female curiosity, resolved to gratify it at all hazards, and ushered the lady inmates of the carriage through by-ways and stairs, to a sort of gallery, whilom occupied by musicians. And from this hiding-place, Lady Merton, her daughter, and Naomi, having just listened to a terrible onslaught upon the religious lukewarmness and Catholic leanings of the semi-liberals, were gratified in seeing Charles Delmer rise to the rescue. Charles had sate at the feet of that great Gamaliel of religious tolerance, Sydney Smith, had caught his tone, and had much the same vein of quiet wit. In such a garb of humour did he clothe the apology, which he volunteered to deliver for

his absent friends. The great good humour of his address was far more effective than its great good sense. The alarm of the devout electors was infinitely allayed, their attention adroitly drawn back from the mere accessories of the political question, to the principal and vital point. The earnest liberals were pleased, the indifferent aroused, their zealous opponents silenced without being hurt, and the effect of a twenty-minutes' address was so magical, as to produce quite a sensation.

There was, assuredly, no approach to the pathetic in Charles Delmer's speech, although the tone of banter often subsided into the earnest. Its effect, however, was to fill Naomi's eyes with tears, and to force admiration to rise with almost a suffocating feeling in her throat. The human voice is so puissant an instrument over the human mind, that its mere sound and exercise, even when not conveying argument or conviction, is often sufficient to persuade or to subdue. Some require a trumpet to move them, others a musical cadence, but the tones of the human voice, with a soul behind it to give the impulse, can have a more subduing and exciting effect than even music. Speakers,

indeed, feel this themselves, and the consciousness can make an orator.

Naomi's eyes were suffused with tears when it was over, when they were returned and when all who had been present congratulating Charles on having so cleverly smoothed down the fears of the ultra Christians, and turned their grave denunciations from objects of terror into food for laughter. The only thing that grated on her feelings was the coarse light in which the effort was viewed. The approbation bestowed seemed more than which might accrue to a jockey, than to one who wielded the highest power of human mind and voice. The praise was awarded to the thing being eloquently nobly, and powerfully, and sincerely done. Felicity was the quality most prized. To tolerate the foolish seemed to be considered a higher quality than to persuade the wise.

More than ever kindled with the idealism making politics and public life a heroism, demi-gods and heroes, whose feelings and conduct were pure and bright to the very idealism, if Naomi was displeased at seeing Charles's oratorical effort treated not

triumph of genius, but as a capital *tour de force*, she was still more annoyed to hear him announce his purpose of visiting a neighbouring mansion, in order to see his friend Jacobi, who was there, previous to his return to dinner. The mansion belonged to a high Tory. The candidate, whose ultra-devout views of politics Charles Delmer had been just turning into ridicule, was a guest there. And Mr. Jacobi, whom Charles was bent on visiting, had enlisted to march with the party, and of course, was prepared to join in its retrograde steps. She, herself, had felt strong repugnance in having successively been a guest at Poyntztett and at Mertons. Yet she was not supposed to have fixed opinions; or to have more than inchoate ones; whilst independently of political opinion at all, she had certainly high interests in common with persons of influence and property in the county, without reference to party.

"I shall be happy to see Mr. Jacobi," said the Earl, "if he will dine and pass the night here on his return to town."

"I thought that several of the Haworths were expected at Mertons," observed Charles; "the gravity of their Whig opinions would be sorely tried by some *incartade* of Mr. Jacobi,

whose tongue is a perfect flail, and whose very aspect sets the hair of a free-trader on end."

"Such claims as his to be a writer frees a man, you know, from the prescriptions of party, and puts him in the category of a literary celebrity; the women are dying to know him. I love originality and daring, and heartily wish success to his personal boldness. If he will come, he shall be welcome."

He did come, and as singularity would have it, so did the Haworths; a high family, remarkable for their number, their beauty, their Whiggism, and their progeneritiveness. If other families carried weight by the antiquity of their race, the Haworths carried all before them by its expansion. There was another northern Whig family almost as prolific, as amiable, and as beautiful. And the consequence was, that they had married into all liberal families, and all liberal families had married into them. So that, if they did not form all the skeleton and great bones of the Whig party, they at least formed the muscles, which held the skeleton together, and knit the body by the strong bonds of domestic alliance. In fact, the Haworths were the House of Austria of English politics and aristocracy. Whilst

other houses rose and fell by conquest, by defeat, by talent, or by weakness, the houses of Haworth and Hapsburg always made the most of prosperity, and the best of adversity, by marrying. They had always a princess to reward a friend, or conciliate an enemy. In every Court of Europe you find an Austrian princess, in every great English family a Haworth; and the *tu, felix Austria, nube*, might be fairly and fully applied to its English prototype.

But, however amiable, the Haworths were extremely narrow in their creed, and their chief creed was their political one. They would admit no salvation out of the sphere of Whiggism; there was no sense, no liberality, no fitness for office, no deservedness of court favour. The Tories were in their eyes as black, as if the House of Hanover was still struggling for its throne against the legitimists. And as to the heresy of radicalism, they deemed it a very dirty, very dangerous, and inexplicable thing.

Charles Delmer was a great favourite with them. He was just the brilliant youth, which the Whig party boasted in producing or in elevating, in finding out and making its own.

He might, at times, run the ploughshare deep into the popular soil; at times by his forwardness the dignified abstinence and reserve of the chiefs of the party. he was so gentle, so apparently *soumis* , little of either the prig or the Puritan in him, that he was almost the last, and for reason the most prized *élève* of the old school. Young men are every day far more wilful, far more unamenable to discipline, far more inclined to woo a constitution on their own account, and with their own ideas, than to take them from the stock of party, and to enlist as a soldier in ranks, where promotion is slow, and the cost of distinction rare.

One of those undisciplined and rebellious spirits, that was determined to take the first rank in England's politics, but at the outset refused to crawl through the zigzags, the covered and tortuous ways, through which party compels its soldiers to their approaches, was Mr. Jacobi, (Delmer's friend. He was considerably younger than Charles, but had gone through the routine of school and university about the same time with him, or a year or two

The early ambition, the imperious craving for distinction, which his mother had breathed into Charles, was pumped up into Jacobi's brain by the powerful machinery of his own breast. Why nature should have implanted such desires, and then done so much to mar or to impede their accomplishment, were difficult to explain. But everything was against Jacobi. His name, first of all, and the lineage it bespoke. His countenance, in harmony with both, full of intellect, and far from belying the superiority which the spirit of the man sought and claimed, but of that strange and outlandish aspect, which an Englishman of all others does not easily pardon, or reconcile himself to.

At school and college, as afterwards in life, Jacobi had twice the difficulties to encounter that others had. Nor was his intellect an exception; for however original and superior, it could not turn itself with felicity, ease, or success to academic efforts and struggles. Jacobi, who saw the mountains in his path, met and attacked them with redoubled energy, and self-sufficiency, and what the world called impudence. Perhaps, if started fair with all the rest of his young

cotemporaries, he might not have naturally put forward such a quality; but he found assurance necessary to make up for all the slurs and defects found in and cast up to him. He could cover and supply them with nothing but the most indomitable and imperturbable impudence. It was the impudence, however, of a wit, not a bully; and Jacobi was more popular on account of it.

To keep himself up, and on a level with a world that showed an inclination, at least so he thought, to depress him, Jacobi drew upon his credit, as well as upon his assurance; and he incurred debts more from pride and rivalry than dissipation. His careful father was shocked to find the results of an expensive education in ambition and extravagance, rather than in any more solid or tangible promise. The vanity of his son, which seemed inclined to vault over the stars, alarmed him for the slender means that were to support it. So that in a panic for his future, his parent bound young Jacobi to the desk of an attorney. Jacobi had a soul above parchment; and instead of engrossing deeds, wrote a book. It was like the man, full of genius, ingenuity, and impudence. The latter secured

its success. Jacobi turned his heel on the attorney's office, and, even with his sire's approbation, set about opening that oyster, the world, with quite another knife from that which mended office pens and scraped parchment.

The days had then gone when great patrons looked out for and discovered rising talent. The days had not yet come when the people, or the middle classes, had the sagacity and the organisation to do that for themselves. Nothing remained but impudence, that indispensable virtue, at a time when modest virtue and quiet genius were commodities which there was no one left to appreciate.

However unfledged and unknown, Jacobi addressed a popular constituency; it was the cheapest, and his sire could not be persuaded to come down with a sum necessary to secure the voices of a more limited and more respectable—that is, a more corrupt constituency. Jacobi therefore went on the popular interest; he had his committee in the long room at the Snob's-arms: he was admitted amongst the cliques of London liberals. But his success did not correspond to either his efforts or his ambition. Jacobi spoke well, but it was

neither the language nor the ideas of the good citizens and the working people, who had become prominent and active politicians after 1830: Jacobi's wit was fine, and his satire polished, but he required an educated audience. In fact he had not the kind of talent requisite for a Radical; nor had he either the requisite sincerity of enthusiasm, or the requisite insincerity to conceal the lack. He was soon, therefore, disgusted with ultra-liberalism. Fain would he have taken shelter with the Whigs; but their chiefs and leading oracles have always had a great horror of forwardness in youth. A man, whatever his genius, unlikely to submit to the discipline of party, could not be welcomed there. Then Jacobi's book was a daring one. He was not a safe man,—a genius, no doubt,—but fit to make a journalist or a pamphleteer.

The Whigs would have none of Jacobi. He somehow or another contrived to put a moral pistol to the governor's head, and thus robbed him of the price of a seat. Jacobi came into Parliament; and Jacobi rose for the first time in Parliament, with his impudent though clever looks, and his *air suffisant* against him. He lost no time in presenting himself

to the House; was received with a calmness that chilled even his gushing fountain of ideas; and he sat down when but half-way in his meandering speech, making a huge *fiasco*. Peel forgot himself and smiled: Jacobi never forgave him.

Oratory, however,—at least such as passes for first-rate in Parliament,—is after all but a knack: and Jacobi, too conscious of his powers to bow to the award of a first failure, resolved to persevere and conquer. He had no friend to urge and encourage him to it more strenuously and sincerely than Delmer, who had himself succeeded, though with all the precautions of preparation, friends, party, and management. Jacobi took two sessions to redeem his first failure. It was no easy matter. His successful penmanship was against him, and was too manifest in his set speeches.

Jacobi, at length finding that a speech, like a novel, might be rendered interesting by personality, tried it. He pushed it, and it told. Malice will do more in this house, thought he, than wisdom. I have failed in seeking men's good opinion, and appealing to their sense and good nature; let me appeal to their malignity and ill nature. Let me

amuse them by pricking some of the levathans of the House with the small sword of my wit; and the day is my own. Jacobi went in, and won; showing himself to be the best horse that started for many years before or after, though he did shy and lose his first race.

The target for Jacobi's arrowy diatribes was Peel. And never, certainly, had statesman put himself in a position more obnoxious to malicious ridicule. A grave man, and one who had begun public life as a purist, to assume the part of weathercock, and twist round on the most important question of politics! No doubt conviction influenced him; he was well assured that no one, save himself, could act up to his convictions, and carry them into effect. There are a hundred excuses for him as a politician, but as a man, who could pardon or admire him? Yet there was no statesman at whose feet Jacobi could have more appropriately sate, aiming solely at the practical and the expedient,—aloof from, yet between the two aristocratic parties. Conservative enough for the timidity of the middle classes, and not enough liberally inclined to inspire despairing and discontented radicals with hopes,

Peel's independent position was the one for talent to have rallied to, especially a talent such as Jacobi's ; but Peel was a Louis Philippe, who did not like anything beyond official cleverness ; at the same time his character and weight filled up the entire road to political eminence, and it was necessary to travel with him, or else to bound over his carcase, and make it a stepping-stone to advance by. Jacobi chose the latter, and was flung by it into that band of politicians, whose rule, law, and principle, was a horror of Peel. They had lost everything by him, privileges, ascendancy, and wealth. Peel was rapidly impelling the country down from a landed aristocracy into the condition of a commercial one. And, although it was but the rapid and irresistible current of time and things which Peel chose to move in, rather than struggle against, they exclaimed against his betrayal of the party and the principles which he pretended to serve. No doubt they were right. To affect the Tory and to play the Radical, after all, in facilitating a material revolution, may be wisdom, but it is decidedly not honesty.

Jacobi remained with the party into which chance had flung him, and to which his aver-

sion to all other parties moved him. said chance, like poverty, certainly intro him to strange bedfellows; but they wer innocent, undesigning, amiable, and re fellows. The old officials of old Toryism died out, the Wherrys were superann the Tadpoles defunct. The rogues of the had died out, and the roguery gone with The very traditions of official knavery far under water, and no one seemed t a line to fish them up again. The who inherited the pure blood of Toryism well contented with the honour of foremost in a party, which, even w clever and experienced leaders, could no So that, from year to year, Protectionism in fact, an amateur essay. And, by such heads and immature minds undertaki support and carry on the war, never powerful and a great principle, as tl Protection certainly was, worse defe Lord George Bentinck, and Lord St have made a character by their appa obstinate defence; but the fact is, the principle of Protection, however erroneou so specious, and had in England so powerful arguments to plead, that poi

will be astonished at nothing so much as at the weak defence, and at the lack of talent, information, zeal, and ingenuity, that the landed aristocracy of England could afford, or could continue to exert or employ in its defence.

As to Jacobi, he came too late, and came in but as a *tirailleur*. His was an effort to cover a retreat, not convert it into an advance. Neither, indeed, had he become as much a master of the House on economical questions, as he was in personal debate, would his party have trusted or followed him. He had neither the descent, nor the acres, nor the *apprentissage* requisite for that confidence. And as it was the peculiar creed of the party that there existed a royal road to mathematical knowledge, and an aristocratic by-path to political wisdom, they were as determined to deny political eminence to mere *roture*, as ever Louis XIV. himself was. Jacobi, therefore, was once more reduced to his old school and college necessity, impudence. He had no other means of attaining, or of holding what was really his right. He was determined to lead the party, whether they would or not,—to be the chief in the eyes of Parliament and of the world, in their very despite.

In thus continuing daily to save the part from ridicule and from failure, it was impossible but that, in the end, they must see that without such a chief they were nothing and that if they wished for respect and weight out of office, or permanency within that palace he could alone lead them, in the storming the fortress of power, and enable them to defend themselves when once in. Thus was Jacobi the compulsory chief of a band of politicians who hated and conspired against him, and who fain would have mutinied, but for the certainty that the loss of him would scatter them like loose fishes on the strand left by the tide.

There was immense gratification to pride and to vanity in Jacobi's position. The rejecter of all parties, he had become the scourge of all save one, and of that he was the tyrant. He could treat great lords like *petits-garçons*, and they could neither fling him into the Bastille nor yet into Coventry, nor blot him from their memory and society, since he was the very locomotive of the party. Jacobi tried to escape from so trying a position by making friends of one or two magnates, explaining to them that their future existence as a class

depended upon management at present, a part of which management was to shoot before the argumentative storm, and accept, at least, *de facto*, what was irresistible. Jacobi only increased suspicion of his staunchness, and his good sense was construed into his being unsafe and insincere. He tried intimacy with those in the foremost rank alongside of him; but the one was a fanatic, the other a fribble. One took everything *au sérieux*, the other all things *au comique*. The one struck with vehemence at trifles, and spoke and thought like an *energumen*; the other laughed in his sleeve at all things, and though he never indulged in the open mockery of Jacobi, considered politics a joke. Why could he not, then, agree with Jacobi?

"I hear, my Lord, you have been electioneering already, and that even the ladies have been to see how many ecclesiastics Charles Delmer is able to kill in a quarter-of-an-hour."

All pleaded chance, the merest chance.

"I hope Charles will not become a parson-eater," said Lord Haworth.

"He is too sensible," said Jacobi, "to make himself the enemy of the parson; that

must not be. But I can't see why he should fight the parsons in a stranger's defence, put forth his eagle wings to cover one Peel's chickens. They will lay eggs in all your Whig nests, my Lord, if you do not beware that brood."

This was rather a sore subject to the Earl who nevertheless said, "If Peel will work the great miracle, it would be ungenerous of me not to protect and favour him."

"I am told, he does the deed," said Jacob. "He is determined to open the sluices to foreign corn; and not only that, but pretend they never can be shut again. He has presented the cup in all its bitterness to his colleagues, and will not allow them either to sweeten it, or even to make three gulps of it. Down it must go at once."

"I do not think," said the Earl, "that Peel himself would come forward and perform the task, however he might look on and admit the necessity."

"Oh! *il aime l'impossible*. He would do it rather than not do it. And though, if he be let others do it, he would be minister for him, he will do it himself, merely that he may enthrone *vous autres* in the seat of power."

"We accept your augury," said Lord Haworth.

"Nay, I will applaud, if you do but only give Charles Delmer the seals, or any seals."

"They would be too hot for my fingers," said Charles.

"I fear they would," said Jacobi; "you are only a Whig by principle and genius."

"What does he require more?" asked Lord Haworth.

"To be one by birth and marriage," calmly observed Mr. Jacobi.

"Peel and his party cannot so easily be swallowed up. Even if, Curtius-like, he leaped into the great gulph which has opened in our forum, the English earth is too generous to close over him," said the Earl.

"People are generous and grateful to the conqueror, who sacrifices lives by thousands. They have no interest of the kind for one who merely feeds and serves them."

The ladies exclaimed.

"I say this, in your hypothesis," said Jacobi. "In mine he starves more than he feeds. But that is not the point. The longevity of statesmen depends more on their adroitness than their wisdom."

"On circumstances," said Lord Hawort
"neither of the Pitts was adroit, nor w
Lord Liverpool, long as he reigned."

"Be that as it may, no party of transitio
ever lasted above a few years, whatever i
talents, or whatever the justice of its caus
A great chief can only lead the band th
crosses from one side to the other. He almo
always perishes in the anxiety of the mov
ment, and then the party are scattered an
forgotten. Look at the Grenvilles, whe
were they in a very short time? Look at t
Canningites, what has become of them?
will be the same with Peel and the Peelite
and then, *Messieurs les Whigs, entre no
deux.*"

Jacobi's words seemed the emblem of in
pudence, to those who heard him; and yet
spoke nothing but the simple truth.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Do you know, Miss Worksworth," said Mr. Jacobi the next morning, "I should almost suspect you of being one of those parliamentary females, whom Lady Louisa Merton pretends to ridicule, but whom in her heart she respects and loves."

"What dreadful symptoms have I shown," asked Miss Worksworth, "that you should so accuse me?"

"Well, your attention and your eyes brighten at the remarks, which bring dulness into those of other young ladies."

"It must be for want of knowing the lighter objects of interest, that I allow myself to be attracted by the more serious ones."

"They can be more blended together than we are apt to imagine. You would gladly do a political act, provided you knew it to be at the same time a generous and good one."

"Decidedly."

"Return Charles Delmer, then, for your division of the county."

"Me! Is it in my power? Should I do it, if it was? How could such as I pretend to control the votes of men, sagacious, reflecting, bearded?"

"Our constitution so wills and ordains it, Madam. You represent property, and have a right to make it felt."

"But I must first know how and why."

"You shall be taught the how and the why to any amount."

"You mock me," Mr. Jacobi.

"Never was more serious in my life. You are shocked, perhaps, at being asked to show interest to Charles. But he is such a good and amiable fellow, so pure, and so honest. He believes in the craft of politics, just enough to be hopeful and enthusiastic, not enough to be a fanatic. He loves the profession of public life as an amateur, and yet it is with him and with many of us, our serious worldly business, our music and our dancing, but also our bread and butter."

"I thought Mr. Delmer was sure of a seat."

"The good people of his own place have

behaved very well to him. And although they have found out that he is poor, and regret that he is not a placeman, I do think they would elect him once more. But it is not enough for him to be a borough member, and an insecure one."

"Surely his talents can do the rest."

"Talents, indeed, with his slender stock of impudence, will do little. His friends are coming in, for Sir Robert cannot hold. But they will do nothing for Charles, nothing like what they ought to do, unless he can do something for himself, and either walk with them on a level, or descend upon them from above. This he could do at once as a county member."

"I thought that wealth and family could alone enable any one to pretend to such a distinction."

"Wealth, if you would elect him, is already found. Distinction he has, and can achieve. Besides, the division of the county is peculiar, and suits Charles's views and pretensions. A conservative or a squire would have no chance in such a populous and town-studded district. I would not canvass the county for

Delmer, if I were not assured that my friend Poyntz has not a chance."

"He is far from being of that opinion himself," said Naomi.

"Oh then, poor Charles has been forestalled already?" asked Jacobi.

"I have been sounded, no doubt," said the lady; "but yours is the first voice that has actually asked me to use an influence, the extent of which, and of the direction to be given to it, I am most ignorant and uncertain. It is a great shame, and a great error, to put women in such a position."

"The constitution wills it, I repeat. As you will hear women's political rights pleaded not merely by Tories, you will hear Socialists cry for woman's suffrage. But I can conceive nothing so delightful or so lofty as a female politician, that is, not an amateur, but one really possessed of influence."

"You are again mocking," Mr. Jacobi.

"On the contrary, serious as ever. It would be easy for them, as it is so impossible for us, to be above party, to say, 'A plague on all your houses!' and to patronize genius, progress, and philanthropy."

"To have no party, we must have no opinion."

"Don't betray me, because I turn aside in benevolence to instruct you; or give me the character of a political atheist, which perhaps I am, if I tell you, that all sensible men in England entertain the same opinions, and take the same views of politics in the main."

"You startle me," exclaimed the lady.

"All the educated and the sensible row in the same boat, and towards the same haven. In a breeze, when there is danger, supposed or real, some of the crew will fling themselves to one side, and some to the other, to restore the balance which the waves and winds will disturb. But all English politicians steer by pretty nearly the same pole-star."

"Then party is not a madness, but a delusion."

"You have said it."

"And it is very little matter which side any one takes."

"Much matter to each, little to all, and none whatever in twenty years time. The world progresses, and individual action, however apparently great at any moment, is nothing in the century. Thus Jacobi the Tory, and

Delmer, Whig, will not change an iota in the political results of English history. We are mere puppets and pawns, and a power superior to us plays the great game."

It was a morning's stroll from out the breakfast-room window, to enjoy the sunshine. Others of the company approached.

"I have been committing treason," continued Jacobi to the Earl, "and have been trying to persuade Miss Worksworth to return, or help to return, Charles Delmer for the Western Division of ——."

"A good deed, in truth, and one that would give me the highest pleasure. But I should recommend Miss Worksworth to consult her friends, or to consider well herself, ere she takes any decisive first steps. A winter spent in the great centre of opinion, and of men, is necessary, ere a young politician have his mind made up."

Mr. Jacobi soon after took his departure. He allowed his chaise to go round by the avenue and road, whilst Charles and he took that on foot through the forest, that which avoided the circuit, and allowed the pedestrian to arrive as soon as the vehicle. Jacobi congratulated his friend on having the ball at his

foot, with which it was impossible not to win. Charles would not comprehend. Miss Workworth was a girl, evidently without a predilection, eager and enthusiastic enough to love, no doubt, but still free as air, and enjoying freedom.

"What more do you want, Alexander, than a realm to conquer?"

"I have not the spirit left for a love campaign," said Charles, "and very little, indeed, for mingling love and ambition."

"All heroes have done so. There are but the two elixirs worth mingling."

"I can conceive paying court to a Duchess de Longueville, to be avenged of a Mazarin, and wooing princesses for a share of their influence; but there is no heroism in fortune-hunting, and no pride in entering the senate through the fancy of a girl."

"And ambition then! What worth is in it? Add independence and opulence to what you are, and where is there a nobler position in the world; the title of Right Honourable, or Most Noble, could not add to it. Woo and be rich, pitch office to the dogs."

"If I had youth to give in exchange for youth."

“ Why, you are some years younger than I am.”

“ It is not the years that count, but the health and the spirit, the *fraîcheur* of existence.”

“ Advice, however, is of little use in these things. Miss Worksworth seems a most amiable person, quite ready to worship, and worthy to be worshipped. Her courage in breaking loose from the trammels of sect and education, bespeaks a strong mind.”

“ Still she must have friends, relations, connexions, and even sympathies, with a class that worship pounds and shillings; that look to the material bettering of themselves and of mankind; and who regard well-bred young gentlemen who venture to talk politics, without estates and without mills, as political adventurers. I should rather ask the Earl for his daughter, than a Manchester man to grant me the hand of the ‘maid of the mill.’ ”

“ But Miss Worksworth is a Zenobia, the queen of a Palmyra all her own, with corn-fields and farms, as well as mills and mines; a fabulous fortune! what hosts of adorers a London season will raise from beneath her

feet! You will let the iron cool, I see, Charles ; and will not strike, but will think of it."

Charles smiled.

"Ay, that 'think of it,'" continued Jacobi, "is one of the good intentions which pave the halls of Eblis. And after all, it would be inconvenient to meet you in the first rank of party. I have made up my mind to be an Achilles ; and I had rather you were a Sarpedon than a Hector."

Charles sighed, and said, the part of Sarpedon would suit him exactly.

"Nay, by the rood, I must leave you, Charles ; you would *attrister* Democritus himself." So spoke the most light-hearted and full-headed of men, as he jumped into the chaise, and rolled off to Poyntztett.

Naomi had something more to engage her attention and demand her interest, fortunately for her, than the usual anxieties of a girl's heart. Some factories that had been kept in activity by her agent, more in tenderness to the workmen and women than with a view to profit, had nevertheless been brought to a stop by their frowardness ; and Miss Workworth was appealed to, to examine into the case, and give a personal decision. Her visit

to Mertons must therefore be much shortened. It had, however, been protracted enough to work in her mind many changes and results. It was the first glimpse of that higher society and life, to which her fortune and position elevated her, in a country like England, where, after all, wealth and power do bridge over the chasm which old laws and usages have placed between them and birth. Yet Naomi was not a little pained, and somewhat even terrified, to perceive what charm such society had for her; a charm that would unfit her, not merely for the society of rigid sectarians, but perhaps for the society of that class in which, after all, she was most likely to move, from connexions, from habit, from pursuit of life, and even from duty.

One comparison she could not help making, to the disadvantage of the new world into which she had just penetrated. It was, that George Pevensey, rude as he was, and deeply immersed in the hard struggle of life, was still more earnest and disinterested in his political views, than any perhaps of the higher class of politicians, of which she had seen such eminent specimens. Mr. Jacobi confessed to, and pleaded for, a kind of political

atheism, which shocked the young and ardent woman. The comments of the ladies, young and old, certainly treated public office less as a matter of high sentiment and duty, than of personal interest and convenience. And even Charles Delmer himself gave in to the tone of general *persiflage*, far more than was reconcilable with earnestness and heroism.

But in this the young lady was led astray by taking tone for reality. The habit of treating every topic in general with lightness, and seldom with extreme seriousness, is unavoidable in a society that would avoid argument and collision of temper. And the subjects most deeply felt, are those most sedulously covered over with a surface of airy smiles and ambiguous nothings. The most heart-felt and serious of conversational subjects is woman ; and yet people treat it as if it were the gayest and most trifling thought that occupied the brain. Religion in general converse, is more often jocularly than even respectfully treated ; which does not prevent Englishmen from being a very religious, as well as a very sentimental people. Politics cannot escape the general rule ; and men who are secretly anxious for conservatism or for

progress, will often talk of both, as if they made not the difference of a straw.

If Miss Worksworth had been startled by the philosophic indifferentism of Mr. Jacobi in dealing with his principles and recommending his friends, what would she have thought had she been witness to the marvellous address shown by that gentleman at Poyntztett? There was not one of the guests of that proud mansion, or of the pillars, or of the temples of the party which Jacobi aspired to lead, with whom the gentleman was not at variance on some vital point. Upon Lord Armington himself, as an unbending Tory of the old official school, Jacobi looked as upon the animals in museums, a stuffed specimen of natural history, the chief satisfaction in regarding which consisted of the conviction that it was extinct. Wherry, the old official, who had become a statesman by routine, knew himself the butt of Jacobi's wit, and stung all that he was able to sting in reciprocity; Bishop Stromboli was equally discontented with Jacobi's orthodoxy, which by no means went the length of ultra-doxxy; whilst Mr. Poyntz found his friend wavering in the quondam creed of Young Englandism, and

more inclined to mock than carry out their scheme of regenerating England by bringing it back to the habits, the social divisions, and ideas of the sixteenth century.

"They are all alive in the north," said Jacobi. "The Mertons were rubbing their aristocratic sides to the wool-packs, at ——. Mr. Charles Delmer has taken the field against the parsons at ——."

"I hope he was virulent," said Bishop Stromboli.

"As good-humouredly jocular as the Rector of St. Paul's."

"The old Whig school of indifferentism," said Wherry, "that shocks one half of the religious world, and does not content the other."

"I met the Zenobia of your manufacturing Palmyra, at Mertons."

"At Mertons?" said the Duke.

"And much fêted."

"As well as sensible of the kindness and condescension."

"Of the kindness, yes; sensible of the condescension, I doubt. Milldom is very proud, and a queen of Milldom necessarily so. She has other queen-like attractions,—beauty,

natural grace, great quickness to cover ignorance, and repair its defects. She will assuredly take a place amongst our stars."

"In politics, what is she?"

"Inquiring, anxious to learn and have opinions, eager to find that philosopher's stone which is to make the poor contented and happy,—just the same, Poyntz, that you and I have looked for."

"With the same sagacity and the same success, you will add," said Mr. Poyntz.

"The first loves of a public, as of a private career."

"That never ripen into mature attachment."

"Why not,—if the flower can be said to ripen into a thing so unlike it as the fruit?"

"We are at least not drawing nearer to its realization; the progress of every day is to reduce the share which the working class have of the general produce, and at the same time educate their minds more fully to a sense of their disinheritance."

"And do you not call this progress? War alone produces change in these days."

"That's my thunder," observed Bismarck.

Stromboli; "that hunger remains the only popular passion."

"It is a thunder that will shake the spheres, whoever it belongs to," rejoined Jacobi.

"Our enemies pretend that by bringing down the price of all English produce to the rate of foreign products, they shall increase food and employ; and that thereby they render the storm harmless, and fill up a chasm that was opening to swallow up the propertied classes."

"There is no denying that by sacrificing the agricultural body of the community," said Jacobi, "you may quicken life, activity, profit, and employment for the non-agricultural. Provisions are labour; by cheapening the one, you double the other. But the impulse once given, the trade once filled, the immediate demands satisfied, a fourth or a fifth of the property in valued produce of the country transferred from land to manufactures,—what then? A few years will place millions as they were before. The limit of production will be revealed, the capacity of markets gorged; more population will call for more employ, increased capital for a greater sphere of activity and a greater ratio of return. The distressed middle class

will seek a new nostrum,—a new panacea for momentary relief. And then you will have what is wanting to effect changes or make revolutions—distress. I use advisedly the word ‘distress,’—which applies to the middle classes and to capital,—instead of ‘want’ which is applicable only to labour and the poor. Distress is more fearful in this country than famine. A moral *émeute* of the middle classes, such as that which faces us, is really more fearful and more dangerous than a mere incarnation of famine.”

“But all the present clamour,” said the Duke, “is in the name of labour and of the poor.”

“There is no mistaking, however, that the present is a middle class movement. Now when we talked of regenerating England Poyntz, we forgot this middle class altogether or treated it as a crowd of such dimensions as could be squeezed into the old corporations and guilds. Instead of this, this middle class is the mob of the day, more turbulent than the popular mob, more tyrannical, not so easily appeased by words, or deceived by appearances. *C’est notre maître à tous*. And the fact unfortunately is, that whilst we have

been standing by the old classes of the English population and villages, and rallying the yeomen and the peasantry, Whigs and Peelites have raised the middle class in quasi-insurrection, and have outdone us ; for swamped, I fear, we shall irretrievably be."

"Not without a struggle," said the Duke.

"It is impossible, unless there be treason," said Wherry.

"These are sad times," said Mr. Poyntz ; but give the Radicals rope enough, and they will soon come to menace property ; and then the middle classes will once more all go with us."

"Oh, yes," said Jacobi, laughing, "if Fourier or St. Simon, or some of the French declaimers against property as an iniquity, would but do us Tories the favour to get up a revolution, and to carry it through into some wild republic, we should be all right again."

CHAPTER IX.

MR. PLYNLIMON has been mentioned as the person entrusted with the management of Mr. Worksworth's property and establishments in the manufacturing districts. Mr. Worksworth had been gradually withdrawing his capital from them, in order to invest it in a way less entangled, and if not so profitable, at least more secure. He had, however, up to a short time before his death, meditated a marriage between Naomi and a youth of his family and name. Death had unexpectedly taken him away, and still more unexpectedly had carried off all the brothers Worksworth within so short a time of each other, that it was impossible even for the provident hand of Mr. Worksworth, to place his property in such a state as he should like to have left it to his daughter. But he had great dependence on Mr. Plynlimon for carrying out his views, which were

to extricate Naomi altogether from mills and factories, unless, within a short time, she married some one who understood such complicated interests.

Mr. Plynlimon was a connexion of Mr. William Worksworth, and had been bred to the same business life to which their families belonged. He had entered, when young, one of their mercantile establishments, and had committed some imprudence, which though it did not affect his character for honesty, marked him as a man of strong passions and an unruly temperament. He was therefore sent beyond sea, exposed to the privations and adventure of colonial life. There his connexions lost sight of him, until he personally re-appeared in Shuttlefield, fairly provided with resources, and not wanting in conduct. Instead of bringing back the laxity of a plantation life, or the recklessness of the sailor and the trader, who had been knocked about in all parts of the other hemisphere, Plynlimon came back as staid and solemn, as demure and sad, as if he had spent all his time in unlearning the vanities of the world. He had taken a religious turn, it seemed, and had even spent several years as a missionary. He brought testimonies from

several well-known characters in those far climes, and there acquired a stock of sanctity which proved sufficient of itself to set him up in trade. There he had also acquired very valuable information, and a practical knowledge of produce and business in those distant regions, most useful in the great centre of the world's supply, which Lancashire in some respects was. Mr. Plynlimon became a great favourite with the Worksworths, and with the entire set and sect connected with them. And though he did not assume or resume the garb of extreme sectarianism, it seemed it was merely religious modesty, and a sense of his own past and present imperfections that prevented him. Mr. Plynlimon made use of his position to espouse a lady, whose connexion filled his pocket and enhanced his importance, advantages that he knew how to keep, even after the loss of his wife.

Plynlimon had, in fact, never ceased to rise, since he returned to the district, and knew the Worksworths. Even now, he managed their external affairs, and represented them more as executor to the will, father to the orphan and friend to the family, than as one deriving any benefit from the management of

such enormous interests, and the handling of such important sums of money. It was remarked as a strange fact, that Mr. Plynlimon had grown in stature since his return from the colonies. He came back a small, thin, worn, strabillious, dark, and yellow little man ; but in old England he ever stood upright, looked straight forward, and gained breadth of mind and of limb. His dark eye and brow, his sallow cheek, might at first have become a Spanish monk of the mendicant orders ; but as his lineaments filled with English prosperity, his eyes were wont to glisten from a countenance in which the ruddy predominated, and would have suited the same monk advanced from the lean Franciscan to the sleek Benedictine. Speaking of monastic looks and institutions, the head of the Church of Rome at certain times holds an ecclesiastical review, to distribute the different functions which are to be assigned to the rising clergy. Some are set apart to be appointed father confessors to nunneries. Strange to say, it is not old men who are selected for this office, but men evidently of peculiar temperament and countenance. Now, Mr. Plynlimon's was a countenance that would ensure his not being

chosen by the sagacious ecclesiastical chiefs of Rome to confess a convent of nuns; they would rather send him, like Dr. Achilli, to shrive the ruddy rustics of a country parish.

One must have been, however, a curious and a close observer to note all this; for Mr. Plynlimon was respected in his class, and was an active, sensible, shrewd, and indefatigable man of business. His duties never seemed too heavy, or too multiplied for him. The busiest of men, he always welcomed more business; nor did he stop to inquire whether it was personally profitable or not. If a charitable association wanted a president or a secretary, Mr. Plynlimon was ready, and to such duties he gave not merely his name, but his time and his money; was punctual in attending, efficient in directing, and, in fact, he was the most valuable man in the community. As to the poor, he had an especial gift, taste, and talent for managing all their affairs, not individually, but collectively. Thus he was poor-law guardian; he was chairman of the Society for improving their dwellings, and providing for their sanitary amelioration; he was Director of the Savings' Bank; and had lent his name and countenance to a scheme

for a wider and higher land Savings' Bank, for directing and managing the larger investments of the more prosperous of the labouring and industrious classes.

But, although such a prodigality of time and zeal as the performance of gratuitous and charitable duties, gave Mr. Plynlimon a colossal character for virtue and benevolence with his own grade, he was not popular with the operatives. His management of the mills under his direction was stern and machine-like. He made no account of talent, or stupidity, of independence, or misfortune. The working man was to him one of the mass, to be held and considered as the mass; so that, although overflowing with kindness towards humanity, he had not a tear or an *obolus*, or a consideration for any one human being.

We fear this is the case with more and better men than Mr. Plynlimon. The man who in the world has got five hundred acquaintances, can care very little for any of them. The man who habitually employs five hundred workmen, looks at them in the mass, and merely esteems those who save him trouble.

The Worksworth operatives were a superior

set, however, and might bear this. They been well culled, and well treated. They clean and roomy habitations, good schools libraries, or institutes even, that pined a what for want of any who had time or inclination for higher studies ; but the common run of information was nowhere better distributed than in Worksworth. In short, there was neither discontent, nor strikes, chartism in Worksworth, until the railway opened, and placed Shuttlefield and Worksworth within nine-pence or a shilling's distance of each other. Then was found a new leaven ; then was opened a very different library of knowledge. Pleasure passed from one to the other, connexions sprang out of them, doctrines and opinions interchanged, and Mr. Plynlimon found Worksworth factories no longer the places that their founder had made them.

Rapid and continual communication in an old, decayed, and corrupt town like Shuttlefield, was not the worst effect that the roads had upon Worksworth. The digging and levellings, and buildings of the railway brought a new class of labourers, whose presence and influence in Shuttlefield has

before described, who, if not wound up to the high mark of political discontent, were a far greater moral pestilence. Skilled and unskilled, these workmen were all highly paid beyond their wants, and without even those few habits of economy that a home engenders. Rude of manners, reckless of conduct, unamenable to the rigid censorship which a neighbourhood exercises upon all within it, they wrought a sad change in the morals of Worksworth, yet were too popular with that portion of the population who fed and lived by them, to admit of their being repressed or corrected. The Worksworth people, a quiet set, were shamed out of their quietude by their boisterous compeers; and there was nothing but admiration and imitation of the new class of industrious *fast* men, who had come to teach the old hands how to live. The sudden invasion of navvies and engineers, bad enough as a passing evil, became a permanent one at last, when it pleased the Company of the railroad to establish their largest engine and workshops between Shuttlefield and Worksworth. The excesses that had been commenced were then perpetuated, and the evil grew from being a casual to a lasting corruption.

It is said that English character is the most original and diversified. This remark being true of individuals, is also true of Englishmen grouped together, who, in the midst of their common and staple qualities, generally excellent, do exhibit the greatest contrasts and anomalies. Thus Brinkley was a land of saints. The people were starving, and bore hunger as a visitation of God, which some even went so far as to return thanks for, as a salutary lesson vouchsafed to them. Not twenty miles off, another town had gone mad and rampant under the same inflictions. There are places where female virtue is irreproachable; there are others, apparently in the same external circumstances, where it may be said not to exist; for as all is not pastoral in the valley, so the domestic virtues are not always found even where there are families and industry.

Mr. Worksworth had become aware, before his death, of the moral deterioration of the place that he had founded. He expostulated with the director of the new enterprise, or rather with the religious friend who had a share in it. Chaplains were appointed, and orders given to make morality a requisite in a workman. But workmen were scarce at the time,

and morality could be no more insisted on than low wages. Measures of defence, in the way of greater activity, were enjoined to the clergy of the locality. The Established Church is, however, not prepared for contingencies of the kind ; although a Government institution, it is founded on the *laissez aller* principle, and shrinks alike from enthusiasm and intermeddling. It might indeed have brought obloquy on a Church establishment to employ them, and the effort would have been set down as tyranny. Such attempts are thus left to less responsible sects, who, trying to combat moral ills, are obliged to work up man to a high state of religious excitement—difficult to attain, difficult to preserve.

It is a boast of the Roman Catholics, that their system is more salutary to the morals of a lower class ; as it is found to be, indeed, in comparing the Protestant cantons of Switzerland with the Roman Catholic ones. Some would introduce Catholicism itself into the industrial districts ; whilst others would merely develop a spurious imitation of it, in the guise of a peculiar system of high Church. Novelty is certainly an element of power and a spring of reformation. In Lyons, for example, there is

much cause for reprehension amongst the female operatives. But this arises from the influence and power of the masters, who refuse work to the weaker sex but on conditions which degrade them. England has been saved from such a stain from the high morality and religious habits of its employing and capitalist class. The Lyons authorities have been powerless to resist the evil; whereas a Protestant sect and clergy have arisen in Lyons, which affords strength, instruction, and firmness of religious belief without its fanaticism, and has proved the greatest of blessings. When an honest Lyons operative wants a virtuous wife, he in general goes to the Protestant temple for one.

Naomi Worksworth was horrified at the state of things which was revealed to her, when she came to examine into the condition of those dependent on her. There was one case especially that filled her mind with poignant regret. In a little brick house, that had once been a cottage, and that still possessed a little garden, although it had become the extremity of a row of small habitations, lived an old blind man and his daughter. The blind man, Errot, had stood by Mr. Worksworth during the Shuttlefield riots, when his

mill had been burned down. Mr. Worksworth had recompensed him by the gift of the cottage for his life, and a small pension, when he became from blindness unable to work. Errot's daughter, a ruddy beauty, had been taken into the mansion at Highlands, but she had not proved grave enough for that establishment, had returned to her father, who, in truth, required her presence and attention, and she got work in the mill. It was with pain that Naomi, instead of hearing her praised as the Rose of Worksworth, heard remarks not so poetic, or so pure, or even so complimentary, applied to Errot's daughter. Naomi saw her, and was more shocked at the girl's tone and responses than at aught else which had struck her in Worksworth. Was such the result of her father's former efforts and prudence, such the produce of his schools, libraries, and encouragement?

Naomi mentioned her suspicions, and the anxieties which they gave her, to Mr. Plynilimon, who appeared thunderstruck at such intelligence. His horror and amazement were greater than those of Miss Worksworth herself. And when they had evaporated, which they did in the most pious ejaculations, he

pronounced such rumours grossly exaggerated. The work of the mills was regular as clock-work; there was no over-time, and children attended school as regularly as work. The female hands were selected for their relationship to the males, under whose protection they would thus in a measure be. As a magistrate, he had shut up beer-houses, and set his face against dancing. No strolling comedians were allowed to display their art or attractions at Worksworth; the people had no amusement of any kind, so how could they go wrong? In his own various functions and cooperations he had the best means of knowing, especially as the Poor-Law guardian. And he maintained that beyond the inevitable admixture of sin and imprudence which beset every community, Worksworth and its mills were not to be reproached. Calumniators would be found, and bad instances turn up; but they were exceptions. At all events, Miss Worksworth could not enter into such an examination. She must repose confidence, implicit confidence, in whoever managed her affairs. And even the head and hand which directed them could not be changed without risk. Experience could not be passed from

air to heir, and there were secrets in trade as in life, which could not be inherited or transferred with the property that required them.

"Misery," says Henry Heine, "thy name is cotton!" He meant it merely when it had reached that perfect state of gay and flowery clothing, which attracts the poor and suits their means, which gives them for the first days of wear the resemblance of a gaudy butterfly, but which is scarcely a robe ere it becomes a rag, and even as a robe affords but a mock covering against inclemency of either heat or cold. Take it from its birth, and surely never seed was so copiously watered with human tears. The slave has sown it, the slave has hoed it, the human troop, under the whip of a driver, have picked it. It is then shipped to the speculator on the Mersey, Jew or Yankee, who concerts with the broker and with the grower to monopolize, and gamble, wherewith vile fortunes are made and honest ones spent, both distilling tears of bitterness. It then comes to the mill, of which the hard-driven owner has calculated, that between the prime cost of the material, and the probable price of the perfected article, there is a fraction of a farthing per pound to

be gained. The elements which go to increase or to diminish this fraction of a farthing are fixed, save and except man's labour. To be generous, therefore, to man is ruin, to grind him down is profit,—and who has a doubt in such an alternative? Congregate a multitude of earners, give them the bare means of subsistence, the impossibility of rising for the future—of becoming other in condition, in fact, than the machines, which are their fellow-labourers; and what must be the result?—selfish dissipation if they are prudent, and begetting of the dissipated and the destitute if they are reckless. With bad examples all around, with want and weariness with childhood forced to precocity, and youth taught the vices, even in acquiring the steadiness, of more advanced years, how is it to be expected to produce morality, or that foundation of all morality and well-being, the regularized and virtuous communion of sexes?

“The fact is, Miss Worksworth, you must one of these days choose a helpmate. Your blessed father's last thoughts were on this subject; and he said, ‘My daughter will espouse an industrious man, no others are either moral or happy.’”

"I know the great inconvenience, Mr. Plynlimon, of being ignorant, and unavoidably ignorant, of what is done in my name. But I really cannot make up my mind to marry, for the sake merely of having my pecuniary affairs prudently conducted."

"Merely!" murmured Plynlimon. Why, is not this everything, with everybody who looks beyond the vanities of life? I am aware that a husband must inspire affection, and feel it; but is not this quite compatible with skill and experience in business? And if this demands some maturity of years, the drawback is not great?"

"I am more ambitious than you think me, Mr. Plynlimon, and abhor business, as you call it—at least in any shape that it has yet presented itself. There are modes of investing money, without the risk, responsibility, trouble, and superintendence that a great deal of my fortune at present requires; and I mean to effect the change, without resorting or referring to that most uncertain contingency, marriage."

"Quite right, quite right," replied Plynlimon, "that a young lady should look about her—exercise her judgment—follow her pre-

dilections. I only hinted. Excuse me for giving counsel."

"Nay, you have every right; and I take it but kindly."

"A fortune consists in the handling of it; to realize in a hurry is a sacrifice that no fortune could bear. We have entered largely into the purchase of the raw material of the business."

"Too largely, I am sorry to perceive, little as I do understand," said Miss Worksworth.

"Yes; but how great the profit!"

"Yes, if realized at once," said Miss Worksworth; "I can at least discern this."

"Nay, but"—and Mr. Plynlimon dived into a whole ocean of calculations, and reasons, and objections; which Naomi cut short:—

"If I cannot make clear to my intelligence the working of a mill, how should I fathom the mysteries of the exchange?"

"As I hinted," said Plynlimon, "the difficulty is to be at once skilful and interested."

"I am sure you are both, for me, Mr. Plynlimon," said Naomi.

"True; and my only wish would be to be more so."

"Is the man mad?" thought Naomi, "or

is his impudence merely a mistaken inference of mine, from his quaintness and oddity? Possessed of my father's confidence, and no doubt of such of his secrets as relate to trade, I am bound to respect Mr. Plynlimon. But I fear that he is too adventurous in important dealings, and far too careless in smaller matters, to me of infinite importance."

Miss Worksworth, as such knowledge opened upon her from observation and reflection, could not but smile at her ardour of some months back, when she thought of nothing less than saving and regenerating the whole population of her district, at least—if not of the entire trade, by which her father's fortune had been made. She now saw, that one village—nay, one mill, although her own, abounded in evils beyond her power to counteract or control; and that her magnificent fortune, instead of being a ready and free instrument to employ for the good of others, demanded for its preservation the continuance of a system, which at times was anything but conducive to virtue, happiness, or comfort.

If Miss Worksworth was discontented and puzzled by her interview with Mr. Plynlimon, that gentleman was equally perplexed and

alarmed by it. He had been elated intoxicated by success, and he deemed tide of fortune so firmly set in in his favour that it would be madness not to take advantage of it. His position, uncontrolled unchecked since Mr. Worksworth's death had enabled him to launch, on the credit of another, into large speculations. Liverpool and Manchester were the seat of these, his heart was thus absorbed in all the changes the rise and fall of his hopes and fortunes and no longer on the petty concerns of Worksworth and its mills. Had he the courage to be sincere, he would have fully displayed his recklessness before Naomi; but Plymli was cautious in speech, if not in act; whilst his dreams were of the highest ambition, his outward mien in no way betrayed the presumptuousness. Thus, while enjoying in imagination the prospect of walking the streets of Liverpool or Manchester, as one of their most wealthy citizens—the success of his plans would almost ensure this—he did not see why he might not hope and pretend to be the hand of the heiress. This, to be sure, was yet more in the shape of a dream or a position, than a real or rational aim.

ould scarcely have owned to himself, in her moments, such a purpose; but his ambition revelled in possibilities, and, according to the temper of the moment, embraced them with the ardour of hope, or let them drop in the doubtings of despondency.

"She will be looking for lords, and designing a coronet for her carriage. I can defeat all that, in the case of the Poyntzes. They worship money in the million—the only shape in which it could give them effectual succour.

They can represent the millions to them as fabulous and insecure. Two or three disgusts and disappointments of the kind will anger the tradesman's daughter against the pride and selfishness of the gentle. She may then turn to the man of business, whom she now despises. And if her affairs be too complicated for another than Plynlimon to unravel, his audacity will influence it, or may. At all events it is a prize worth struggling for, and for the sake of securing which all other impediments ought to be removed."

Miss Worksworth had obtained very little insight into her own affairs by her conversation with Plynlimon, and very few hopes, not merely ameliorating the condition of those employed

by her capital and in her establishment, but even of keeping them on a fair level of comfort and morality. She was resolved, therefore, to seek for information from below, since she could not obtain it from the high functionaries of the mills. She had other pretexts and motives for summoning Thaddeus to her presence, being anxious to serve the Pevenseys in any way that she could find possible, or that they would permit her. She therefore induced the lover of Rachel to forego a Sunday at the farm; and eagerly did she seek that enlightenment from the workman, that the master and overseer would not vouchsafe her.

With respect to his own prospects, and the mode in which they could be improved, Thaddeus proved as satisfied and as proud as if he were already the brother of George Pevensey. He earned sufficient in a post of confidence. In his calling capital was everything, since it alone could bridge over the chasm which separated workman from master. But he had made his arrangements, and possessed sufficient to set up for himself in one of those rising communities which spring up every day in America, on the confines, which

separate the woods from civilization. He and Rachel were but awaiting letters from the United States, "when they would bid good bye," he said, "to the tyranny, the pride, and the poverty of his native land."

"It does not seem that you have personally any reason to complain."

"I had the good fortune to have parents, who taught me a skilled trade, and had money to communicate to me that skill. But I think upon the thousands of my fellow-labourers, who are ground down, as I should be myself, had I not another land to escape to."

"It appears to me," said Naomi, "that you are quarrelling with Providence, which has willed that there should be poor,—that there should be multitudes on the very brink of want, without a thought beyond the procural of daily subsistence. Whether the few, who are placed above these cares, have not others quite as painful, may be questioned."

"But let the poor have a chance of escape from poverty."

"All countries cannot be always young and empty, like America, no more than it can be expected that the son of the prodigal should have equal wealth with the son of the prudent."

"It is not the possession of wealth that one envies, so much as the monopoly of all other places, privileges, and advantages, by the wealthy class or their relatives."

"You have thought a good deal on this subject, for a man who wields a hammer."

"The hand on the hammer sets my brain a-going, instead of stopping its action, as it does with my comrades."

"So that as you have reflected on this subject, Mr. Thaddeus, and I have not, I do not understand you."

"I mean, that wealth has great advantages of its own, such as the exclusive power to employ. This, perhaps, we cannot envy. But there are a crowd of places and positions, that the sons of wealth have no more aptitude to fill than the sons of poverty, provided the sons of poverty were fairly educated and principled."

"Then it is not any share of capital you want, in order to better the working man, but some openings out of his class into higher callings and professions?"

"What is so galling and oppressive as the strong division between two classes, one of which is framed to command, the other to

obey; the one supposed to be fraught with honour, the other incapable of so high a motive; one supposed to be educated, the other not, although the education of the first is very often nothing more than a knowledge of forms, and proficiency in a social cant. I, a plebeian, may not have a right to a share of the capital which the fathers of others have amassed, but I have an equal right to share in the wealth, and emoluments, and dignities of the state."

"You seek, then, the right to be a politician and a placeman," said Miss Worksworth, smiling.

"Nay, I might wish to be a bailiff or a soldier, it matters little. The rich and the noble monopolize either the possession or the nomination of every place, on the plea that they alone are capable, honest, and worthy."

"Has not the wealth, which is the sinews of the state, and gives it power, somewhat of a right to dispose of those offices which it principally pays?"

"Oh! that is a mistake, Miss Worksworth; in all countries, and certainly in this, it is the poor that furnish the national revenue."

"But wealth, at least, should have its due influence."

"It has so much natural influence, that it has no need of that which unjust legislation gives it."

"We have talked some time, Mr. Thaddens, and I have yet no clearer insight into your grievances. What remedy would you propose for these things, which you so angrily denounce?"

"Pardon me, Madam, I will not employ so vulgar a word as the Charter; but what I mean comes pretty much to the same point. In England, those who are born to wealth and high position are masters of the poor, the immense majority of whom remain from father to son in a servile condition. There are as many domestic servants as agricultural labourers in England, and one is as dependent as the other. The tradesman cringes to wealth as much as either. That makes a servile nation."

"Has the world ever seen a more brave, more manly, more independent?"

"God has preserved England, Madam; but if this country were tried, as other countries

have been tried, France for example, as I read of, how would it have come out of the trial?"

"Free and triumphant," exclaimed Naomi, "certainly not dishonoured."

"I should be glad that your lover, young lady, saw you at this moment," said Thaddeus. "Even I, a young man, envy you these noble sentiments, which discontent has blighted in me."

"I am glad, Sir, you see there is some degradation in the want of them."

"Still I cannot help thinking that when a time of trial comes, as it must to all nations, England will find the want of a peasantry more erect, a working class more contented, and the bulk of the nation itself less servile."

"Let England in times to come resemble England in times past, and that will suffice. I doubt the Charter's power to make a noble race."

"I care not," said Thaddeus, "for the points of the Charter. But I see in England the rich sovereign masters of the poor, whilst I read how in Athens the poor were masters of the rich. Both have their abuses. And I do believe, that the government of the ignorant and selfish rich, when the rich are so, is as

bad as the government of the ignorant and selfish poor, when they are so. Let political power be theirs who can use it best; the people would not strive for it if the fair chances of life were open to the lower born. If they had a national education, if offices and the grades accompanying them were given by competition and election,—if, in short, the lower classes had as many compensations for the want of wealth, and as many means of supplying it, from public funds, for their own benefit and that of their children, as the rich have, they would not make war on capital nor turn communists.

“Well,” said Miss Worksworth, “I am sorry to see an intelligent workman, and, I fear, a leading spirit with his class, trust to political change as the short way to social repose, and to making up the inequality of human condition. But this consideration is for other personages than we are, and for another place than this. What I seek is a more practical remedy for pressing evils. What can I do for Worksworth, for example?”

“Employcapable, discerning human agents.”

“Recollect the difficulty at times of making such establishments even remunerative, and

the consequent necessity of, even in prosperous times, keeping a free margin of profit. I do not see that higher wages can be given, or rendered more fixed. I have examined the matter with Mr. Plynlimon."

"The operatives have no confidence in him."

"He is a most charitable man. Few devote more time to the poor than he does."

"I will not repeat whispers, the truth of which I could not prove, but those who know Mr. Plynlimon best, like him least."

"He must act by rule, and be sometimes severe. Besides, my people are much more difficult to please, since wicked artizans came amongst them."

"All is laid to the blame of the *locos*. They have set men thinking, no doubt."

"And, I am told, the *loco* is not so well behaved as he was."

"The *locos* in general, are ready enough to marry, if they meet worthy girls. There was your favourite, Rose Errot; there were half-a-dozen eager to marry her, till she showed herself flighty."

"And what made her flighty?"

"Being tampered with, no doubt, by some one higher than an artizan."

"Well, if she has made a rich conquest, she is not to blame for ambition. It appears from what you say, that to gratify the ambition of the lowly is the grand thing wanting."

"Nay but," said Thaddeus, "I fear poor Rose's ambition is neither honourable nor wise."

"If it were yet time, I would give much to defeat any evil design with respect to her, and set her right, poor girl. Her blind father leaves her an orphan, with no efficient care."

"One of my comrades loved Rose wildly and would even now go through fire and water to secure a return. But she is insensible and ungrateful."

"Will you see what can be done, Thaddeus and inform me. In fact, it was on this subject more than any other, that I sought to speak with you, though I spoke of the grievances of the working class in general. These we cannot alleviate, I fear. But an individual case of wrong may be redressed, or defeated."

"To this I will look," said the artizan.

Miss Worksworth's inquiries had, however

already carried alarm to the misleader of Rose Errot, and she was closely charged by him with pertness and imprudence in the answers which she had made. Some ill-placed boldness had not only drawn suspicions upon herself, but had awakened them in the breast of the Lady of the Factories against the purity and morality in general of the young female population of the place.

"Does she think," said Rose Errot, "that because she has thousands upon thousands a-year to be virtuous, that poor girls are not to make friends and take amusement where they can find them?"

"Yes, Rose," said her interlocutor. "But in this country poor girls are not permitted to talk in this way. It is treason and atheism. A magistrate would send you to prison for such words, or a judge to Van Diemen's Land."

"But all the people talk that way,—factory hands and railway *locos*. There are not ships to transport 'em all, nor prisons to hold them."

"You mentioned no names to Miss Workworth."

"Names of whom, and for what?"

"She did not ask names of you, or particulars?"

"All possible kinds of particulars about myself."

"I fear," said the man, "you must have increased, if you did not directly create, her suspicions, for she was cross-grained on the subject more than is the nature of young ladies, and mysterious, as if she saw to the bottom."

"As if —— himself could see to the bottom of you."

The man started at a taunt so bold, and perhaps so true a thrust. And there was that in his gesture, that boded no good to her who provoked it.

"Deep as one may be, Mistress Rose, there are eyes that will penetrate. And what a ruin to me would be bare suspicion! what a ruin to both!"

"If I told the great lady no lies," said Rose, "I told her no truths. She may suspect what she likes."

"But you work in the factory. Your language is a specimen of what may be found there."

"Take me out of the factory, then, and let me live as a lady."

"Where?"

"Lor' bless us! anywhere. Though I like the fun of the *locos*, and the jabber of the girls, and love to cheer up my old father with a song."

"Better go away from the beggarly land altogether. At Sydney, with plenty of money and the world to choose, you would be a lady indeed."

"And leave you behind! That were unkind advice."

"I have no thought but of following myself, for, Rose, you know we cannot go together."

"I know we sha'n't go apart," said Rose, turning upon her interlocutor sharply.

Whatever the immediate result of this conversation, the upshot was that Rose Errot was no more heard of at Worksworth. She disappeared totally, leaving her old blind father to weep and mourn, though he was not found to want. Nor could all the efforts of Thaddeus and his friends arrive beyond the vulgar conjecture that Rose Errot was gone to seek her fortune in London, where thousands of the like of her had gone and disappeared before.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER having restored peace and content, at whatever cost to herself, in Worksworth, Naomi resolved to take advantage of the two months, which still remained of what is called the London season, to take a glimpse of that great arena of interests, influence, character, and ideas, the metropolis. She declined accepting an invitation given her by the family of Mertons. She did not want to take a bird's-eye view of London, and descend at first upon it from a height, that would render all things beneath it petty, confused, and indistinguishable. She had at her disposal wherewithal to shine and to dazzle, when pleasure offered itself as the result, or any more worthy gratification as the object of such an effort. But her good sense and good instinct taught her to aim at penetrating

into the middle circle of society, as that most suited to her inclination and connexion, and which was at least the best ground for studying or observing the above and the below.

Miss Worksworth, therefore, instead of becoming the guest of a princely abode, or of setting up one for herself, came on a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Pistrucci, whose acquaintance had been valuable to her father, and who in his turn had tried to procure Naomi some relaxation of the rigid rules of the family with regard both to attire and education. The reminiscence was the occasion of much mutual amusement. Naomi thought of her good parents, heaping up wealth for her with one hand, and with the other labouring to render her unable to make the least use of it. The Pistruccis stood high in the artistic and literary world, which naturally to Naomi implied a world of intellect, apart from those of wealth and fashion, and as little influenced by their weaknesses and prejudices, as secure from being vulgarized by the material interests of life.

In this, as in most anticipations of London life, Naomi was doomed to be grievously disappointed. Literary or artistic society, she

soon found there, was none, the desire either allying their mutual interests, or communicating their ideas, not existing between persons of this class; on the contrary, the most absurd and puerile repulsion operated either between individuals or sets. There was indeed no malignity, no hatred, none of the old Italian school of rivalry, in which the sword and dagger were constantly employed; little even of that *médiance*, that war in which the literary and intellectual folk of Voltaire's days assassinated each other *à coup de langue*. It was simply over-susceptibility, and an adoption of some of the most absurd laws of an intellectual society, in which advantageous positions are to be kept or lost by manner, by petulance, by dress or address. Persons whose sole distinction is their intellect, and who actually live by it, ought surely to stand above all other claims and ways of superiority; nay, ought to be profoundly indifferent to the arbitrary modes of arranging the world's grades, which fashion invents and fools enforce, as with such a portion of the people mistaken as to relative worth cannot be made. But men of letters in England ignore the world of letters altogether, as well as the profession

which they would hide and forget. They look up to another world, to that of rank, wealth, eminence, and position—of which they are not denizens, much less arbiters, and in struggling to take rank there, where all dispute it, they lose their dignity, their happiness, their distinguishing excellence, and their worth.

Another thing that struck Naomi painfully, was the total ignorance and recklessness of so many men of intellect and letters, with regard to the great and serious questions which affect and agitate society. Some called themselves Liberals, and some Tories, and they carried this distinction so far, as to have personal predilection or repugnance for the personages of this or that party. But for any real knowledge of public affairs, or sympathy with them, your Englishman of the middle and professional class, if he be not a lawyer, preserves himself as from profanation. He leaves even the task of judgment in public matters to the well-born and the well-endowed, esteeming such care to be an apanage of the aristocracy, or semi-aristocracy, and considers himself as a mere earner, not entitled even to inquire, much less to decide upon, or interest himself in, the march of things, and in the forwarding

or checking those great questions and ideas which constitute England and English life what they are.

This abnegation, this almost frivolity, were evidently painful to Naomi. Although there was little of the democrat in her mind, no jealousy of birth, and no dislike of high class or station, she still felt and marvelled at that abdication of all political knowledge and influence, which nineteen-twentieths even of our educated classes subject themselves to. The very science of politics in England is personal and oral. It is not to be got from books, not to be learned by the solitary man, or the humble man, or the man that lives aloof. It is, a great part of it, indeed, the administrative part, almost traditional, handed down from father to son, and from public man to public man, through the several channels of office, utterly hidden from the public. And hence the freemasonry of office in England, and the obstacles opposed to the admission or initiation of any vulgar man, whom the great effort is never to admit beyond the ante-chambers of office.

When Naomi hinted her first perceptions of the kind to Mr. Pistrucci, or any of his

friends, they were quite unable to comprehend her. They all considered politics a profession, and not their profession; and they were for the division of labour. In fact, they did not comprehend her. Charles Delmer, however, understood her perfectly, and wondered how she had happened so soon to put her finger upon that wonderful peculiarity of English life, by which the middle classes, said to overrule everything, are in reality the mere tools of the class above them, and by which a knowledge of public affairs in England remains as close a monopoly and a mystery, as ever Egyptian philosophy and religion were of the sacerdotal caste, who professed and profited by it.

Charles Delmer understood this well. "There was no country in the world," he said, "in which the middle and lower classes had so profound a dislike of politics as in England, nor so profound a distrust of their own knowledge of them. In France, every man not only desires to be a politician, but considers himself a first-rate one. In England, where no money is to be made of them apparently, politics are left to those who can afford to apply themselves to such a pursuit. The consequence is, the middle class always return members

and employ champions secretly opposed to their interests and tendencies, ready to go with them in appearance, and to betray them in reality; so that the career of popular and liberal politics is one long series of deception. If the different classes of English life would but make up their minds to have each a champion and representative of their own, as gratuitous or chivalrous champion, but one who would undertake the task and trouble for a fair recompense, they might then have real influence, and might really further their interests. As it is, they are jockeyed by the gentry, or by fools and adventurers of their own class, not chosen for their value, but taken because they offer apparently gratuitous services; whilst not one person undertaking these political tasks, be he ever so noble or rich, but does so with a purpose of paying himself in some shape or another. There is neither proficiency, honesty, or skill in a profession exercised gratuitously, either as military duties in the old times, or magisterial duties now. There is nothing good or perfect but what is paid openly, and well paid for; and politics form no exception to the rule."

Delmer was not long in finding out Mr

Worksworth at Mr. Pistrucci's. It was a critical moment for him, and he by no means succeeded in banishing from his countenance the care that preyed upon his mind. Sir Robert Peel had declared his determination to abolish all duties and impediments which raised the price of food ; whilst, unfortunately, at the same time he relied on a party, whose business consisted, and whose position depended, on supplying food, and keeping up the prices. He was naturally deserted by them, and he resigned. Charles's friends, the Whigs, were summoned to form an administration, and he would then soon know who appreciated him, or how he was likely to fare in the distribution of office. Charles had more than his political fortunes and career at stake. He was seriously enamoured, yet determined not to come forward and declare any pretension to the lady's hand, unless he could do so from the vantage-ground of office. This, were it ever so small, still if it left openings to ambition, and bespoke the promise of an honourable career, warranted him, he thought, in paying his addresses to a woman of wealth. He then, at least, would have something to offer, some-

thing to save him from even the unmerited reproach of being a fortune-hunter.

The ministerial rupture had, therefore, great interest for Naomi, and yet there was one little event that had a much greater effect upon her than even the catastrophes of public life,—this was her first visit to a theatre. She had been taught to abhor such places as temples of sin, and no doubt they partook of the stain which affected literature, and piety itself, at the time when the Puritans denounced the stage. For a national theatre will partake of national habits, and will reflect the current language, ideas, and feelings of the time. The Puritans therefore naturally anathematized the theatre of the Cavaliers. But to continue to anathematize now, as so many of the high and sublime religious writers in England do, is literally to deny to virtue those moral emotions which nourish and strengthen it. It was just as well, however, that Naomi went for the first time to witness the representation of our great dramatist alone with her friends the Pistruccis; for had Charles Delmer, ever little *blasé* as he was, seen the effect of the simplest scenes upon the girl, the excess of her almost infantine enthusiasm and sus

ceptibility, might have diminished his respect for the woman.

The Pistruccis promised Naomi that if the representation of Shakspeare and Otway, with whose works she was already familiar by reading, had caused her such ecstasies, an opera would be to her still greater gratification. In this they were mistaken. Naomi was still Puritan enough to be alarmed at many of the attractions of the opera, whilst its beauties were not discerned by her unpractised ear. The airs of Rossini could not but have their charms; but the high dramatic, as well as musical, beauty and originality of the composition, required a long habit of listening to musical language, not so soon obtained, especially by one to whose youth the use of a piano was forbidden as profane.

Chance procured Naomi a pleasure greater than even these novelties, placing her in contact with one who, for the moment, was the great object of the national thoughts. She had been visiting the lions of Westminster, both Hall and Abbey, and was returning through that funnel of a street leading to Whitehall, where the tide of business ebbs and flows at its different and appointed hours

of the day, when a thought struck Mr. Pistrucci. Sir Robert Peel had thrown open his house on that day, for the sake of allowing his gallery of pictures to be seen by all interested in such a sight. It was seldom that he could afford to be intruded on ; and he chose the morrow of his retirement from office, thus to devote a day to the honor of Painting and her votaries. It at least enabled him to turn his back upon politics, and present himself in a new light to the English world. They entered the parlour, where the great political leader was wont to ensconce himself, and where, like Mazarin, he reposed his mind from affairs of state by contemplating the creations of the artists' pencil.

There is a striking scene in Brienne's Memoirs, which represents Mazarin, in his arm-chair, placed in the midst of his gallery of pictures, up and down which he caused himself to be drawn. Dismissing his attendants, the Cardinal swayed himself backwards and forwards in his chair, being otherwise incapable of motion, and exclaimed with agony " I must quit all these—I must quit all these—for my physician tells me I must die. It did not cost Mazarin a sigh to qui

power. He was still Prime Minister, his behests uncontradicted and unopposed. The robes, revenues, and sanctity of a prince of the church were unthought of and uncared for at such a moment, avaricious as he was. His sole thought was his pictures: they not only had value, but they spoke to him.

Although both loved pictures better than men, there were few more unlike than Peel and Mazarin. The latter loved the arts with the delicate and discerning fibre of an Italian; Peel with the liberal, conscientious, but incapable taste of the Englishman. Mazarin was endowed with a sense of the beautiful: Peel discerned and worshipped the great and beautiful in public life, but he never arrived at knowing what these were in a picture. Mazarin, *vice versa*. Both were especially hated by the aristocracy of the section they governed: Mazarin, because he subjected them to the power of the crown; Peel, because he brought them to a safe level, compatible with the maintenance of their rank and influence, at a time when rank and privilege became universally menaced.

Sir Robert had few words for his company, though he walked in the midst of them.

Awkward in speech as in person, he was not the man to charm either superior or inferior. Indeed, he was so fully aware how much he lost by personal contrast, that he was invariably anxious to avoid it. He was a perfect *cauchemar* to royalty, until it learned his value,—until fully initiated into the perplexities of Government, it had learned to prize the *fond* above the form. Saying a few words to Mr. Pistrucci, the veteran statesman learned that the young girl, who came to see his gallery, was then known to have inherited the large wealth of her family, made in the Californian time of spinning. He was struck by the affinity of position, and came forward to accost the girl with the interest that a relation might inspire.

“The first time in London—the arts not sufficiently prized in the manufacturing districts”—here a compliment to Pistrucci, for his labours to correct this want, and success in supplying it—“But you probably know nothing of manufactures, besides their affluent results.”

Naomi observed that Worksworth and its factories still remained hers, and was at that moment a source of great perplexity, from the necessity of limiting work, and the difficulty of

uniting this with the number and extent of the population.

"It is wrong for the female, the idle, the necessarily ill-informed, and not all-interested, to keep such property when the duties to one-self and to one's neighbour were so nicely balanced and so onerous, that it required a life and a genius to reconcile or disentangle them. Life were best devoted to one thing: the making a fortune, or the using a fortune; one as difficult as the other, if the latter be done well. There are so many things—great things—that can only be done by those endowed with independent fortunes, and endowed with them from an early age; and this is especially the case in England. To inherit fortune with the capability of turning the time and influence which it affords to great and good ends, is the greatest blessing that can befall an individual: the endowment without the capability, a curse. To enjoy a great English fortune, as a bullock does a truss of hay, or a bushel of turnips, and simply *manger*, eat it, as the French emphatically say,—that is a degradation and a crime."

The statesman kindled as he delineated this sketch of the duties of a great fortune, but

hastily checking himself he exclaimed, "But a lady cannot entertain or undertake these things, except vicariously."

Naomi instantly thought of Charles Delmer; had he been born to such a fortune as that which she possessed, how aptly formed was he to follow those high aims and purposes, which the great statesman and son of manufacturing wealth pointed out. Sir Robert felt flattered, that so unusual and startling an effort, or outburst, as that in which he had indulged, had had so great an effect. For it plunged the few listeners into a world of absorbing thought. The Ex-Premier broke it, however, by interrupting a tall and slender person, who was pouring into his ear the news of the day, and introducing Miss Worksworth to the son of the Duke of Armington.

Sir Robert had the great gift enjoyed by philosophers, rather than politicians, of selecting well, and attaching to him firmly, a body of intelligent disciples. Indeed, he may be said to have robbed the Tory party of all its young intellect; and when he left it, he left it without brains of any kind, save such as it could beg, borrow, or improvise. Lord Stanley and Lord George Bentinck came to it from the Whigs.

or from the Whiggish ground of Canningism ; and D'Israeli dropped to it heaven knows whence. Lord Poyntz was a good specimen of what birth will do for a man, who has the good fortune to unite with it the vulgar virtues of industry, application, and sense. With all the oral and official knowledge of a British statesman,—heir to rank and station,—none seemed more likely than he to head a Tory party, which admitted an esoteric or secret doctrine of liberalism, joined to an exoteric, or out-of-doors connexion with the old prejudices of the nation. Lord Poyntz, however, was too small-voiced, and modest, to *poser* for the public, or to claim their attention by assuming attitudes, or uttering manifestos. Even Naomi remarked that he was not masculine enough to lead in a great struggle, or at least to claim to be first in such a *mélée*. But who then could foresee that the mortal as well as the political career of Peel was near its close ?—who could augur aught but that he would overcome the resentments and outlive the animosities of the conservative party, and reorganize them upon rational and, in some respects, upon liberal grounds ? In that case, Lord Poyntz was well fitted to be the Labienus.

of Cæsar. And he might well smile at his sire's forebodings, too true as they indeed turned out, that he had abandoned the true ground and the trusty followers, to build on the sandy soil of transition; and that, instead of restoring his house or supporting it, was doomed to suffer still further eclipse under Lord Poyntz's too clever management.

"You have been to Poyntzstett, Miss Workworth," said the Earl, "and have seen the valiant owner, full of zeal for the good cause, as he considers it,—which I am graceless to consider a mistaken one. What a splendid cavalier this Lord would have made two hundred years ago! What a pity the days of chivalry and martyrdom are over for such men; and that they must succumb to such unchivalrous enemies as free trade and old mortgages."

"I hope," said Miss Workworth, "that Poyntztetts will never succumb; and that what is feared as its ruin, may prove its prosperity. There is more poetry in the château than in the mill; and I know no object or person so worthy of sympathy and of commiseration as the old English squire and baron, who sees his rent-roll threatened, his influence gone, his family impossible to provide for, and

himself threatened to be put on the shelf as a mere respectable reminiscence."

The politicians exchanged smiles ; and the Earl said, "One would think you had been listening to my son Poyntz, who, along with Young England, takes the poetic side of the question."

"I do not know when I have seen Mr. Poyntz," said Miss Worksworth, colouring.

"It is not his fault, I am sure," said Lord Poyntz. "You have won all hearts in the north ; the Duke of Armington has been touched by your sympathies, and Lady Louise Merton makes vows to you as the Madonna of the factories. Bishop Stromboli declares you orthodox ; and my son boasts he has found one to comprehend him."

Naomi exclaimed that she had not merited such all-sided popularity.

"Don't be alarmed," said the Earl, "you are but in the flower, that pleases every one, and leaves every one hope. In a little time you must take shape and colour ; and you will find enemies and antagonists enough, the more bitter from considering themselves disappointed."

"Think long, and choose well," said Robert, pressing the hand of the heiress; took her departure from Whitehall Gate very little impressed with all that was remarkable or curious, but moved by the few words that had fallen from eminent men.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER having dared the Opera, Naomi could make no valid objection to going to Epsom,—that great spring festival of the Londoner, whether indigenous or merely sojourning,—that national or metropolitan Saturnalia, where the upper class loves *s'encanailler*, and does not shrink from rubbing its skirts with those of the shoe-black and the costermonger,—whither the careful shopkeeper, forgetting the principles of economy of the year, charts a barouche, to drink champagne and stake his odds,—for which the lawyer quits his business, the miser his chest, the legislator St. Stephen's,—whither women of all grades rush, exciting and excited,—and whither foreigners hie, to see honest John Bull leave the vivacity and vehemence of his continental brethren far behind.

Naomi consented to go, and be a spe of the Epsom fête, in the quiet compa the Pistruccis, altogether unconscious th should meet an epitome of the world the Downs, and unsuspecting that the g persons would on that day quit the g business, even that of the nation, to w a struggle between a score of young untried horses as to which would ru fastest.

Charles had agreed to join them o course; but ere he did, or could do so Poyntz lit upon them, and was so litt posed to be content with a passing salut that he lingered and prepared to act ci as well as cavalier to Miss Worksworth. circumstance drew much observation o humble vehicle; for Mr. Poyntz, just em from the university, and the heir to a coronet, was a cynosure not ignored i gay world that thronged to Epsom.

Naomi, destined from another cause equally the attraction of the social eye purposely deferred that time; so that sh now set down as a foreign princess in *inco* a Jew heiress from the city, a *prima* just arrived, but not come out; with a h

other probable or improbable conjectures. They were made by women, for the men were as yet too much absorbed in their books, or in the consequences of the day. And Mr. Poyntz could thus point these out, without attracting more of their attention than he desired. He was well fitted to be a cicerone in pointing out the *personnel* of Epsom Downs; for his party presented the *illustrissimi* of the course.

The Derby race did not strike Naomi for what it was—the most marvellous combination that could have been invented for the great national and legal pastime of gambling. First, the seeming impossibility of any one's being able to make even a shrewd guess as to the result; thus putting on a level the knowing and the unknowing—at least sufficiently so to attract and give confidence to the latter. Then the large field of possible contingencies, and the immense odds of the negative against the affirmative, giving to simple betting the compound interest of the lottery. These perfections in a game of chance were quite lost on the young sight-seer, at least in theory; but in practice, she could not but share the excitement that attracted and pervaded thousands,

kindling up an enthusiasm and a gaiety in an English multitude, that the emancipation or enslaving of all Europe would not have produced, could it even have been seen sensibly, as with the mind's eye it might then have been contemplated, from the Surrey Downs.

Having placed the carriage in a convenient spot for witnessing the race, Mr. Poyntz entered upon his duties of conversationist, which were soon shared in by Charles Delmer, who came to shake off his anxieties or dissemble them on the race-course.

"You have been to Mertons," Mr. Poyntz said; "I hope they have not made quite a convert of you, Miss Worksworth."

"Convert, to what?"

"Oh, their way of thinking; that of every one his own King, every one his own Church, every one his own everything!"

"I never heard one word of politics whilst I was at Mertons, but from Mr. Jacobi."

"That was delicate. I only talk of such things because I am an apprentice. See, how our folks can shake off such cares; in the midst of the ministerial break-up, here they are regulating the course, looking into colts' mouths, striving to discern fleetness in the

limb, or fortune in the name. They are thinking more of betting-books than profound speeches, and of Tattersall's, not Downing-street."

"They make a business of pleasure, for want of more active business to interest them."

"Pleasure is not worth the name, that is not made a business of; that is, which does not command the whole mind. Your Englishman is just as serious in his sports as in any act of his life."

"Much more so," observed Mr. Pistrucci.

"See our *chef de file*, Lord George, this moment with a countenance as full of care, and a mind as strained by tension, as if he were pleading the cause of a great political or mercantile interest."

As Mr. Poyntz spoke there came up a gentleman with a handsome countenance and fine athletic shoulders and chest, yet with a voice that seemed with pain to extricate itself from the passage of his throat; it was like a pump with a dry sucker, that brought up its words with great difficulty.

"Don't bet on Running Rein," this personage said to Poyntz. "He'll win, as surely

as Lord Johnny ; but I'll prove the winner here as false as Peel himself, for all his cunning disguisements."

"Lord George is the happiest man on the course," said Mr. Poyntz ; "he has got a chance to expose, and on his own ground, where no one can compete with him."

"And he will as doggedly set about it," said Charles Delmer, "as he would to prove a twenty-shilling duty indispensable on corn or sugar."

"I cannot understand his inveteracy against Sir Robert Peel," said Miss Worksworth ; "surely he does not imagine his last measure to have been induced by anything less than honest conviction."

"The chiefs of Mr. Poyntz's party, craving his pardon," said Charles, "do not trouble their heads to inquire whether what Peel has done has been done from conviction or calculation. They only know that he held the contrary opinion for a score of years, and helped to root them in the belief of that contrary opinion by votes and speeches interminable. And the worst of Peel in their eyes,—even worse than his inconsistency—is, that he is in the habit of giving up those positions,

which he taught his followers to defend so unflinchingly, just at the moment when he was most sure of success, if he persevered. He yielded to the Catholics, just as he had completely beaten them; and gave up to free trade, when his majority was larger and stauncher than ever."

"A bad sportsman in short, and a deceitful backer," observed Mr. Poyntz.

"His behaviour, I own," said Charles, "though good and wise in my opinion, was still against every rule of English life, in sport or more serious matters."

"Byng was shot, and Whitelock ought to have been hanged, for something like it."

"Oh," exclaimed Naomi, "this is shamefully exaggerated. You will make me doubt for ever of political justice and generosity."

"Look for either round yon betting stand. An Englishman in public life, is like an Englishman on a race-course."

"How is that?"

"His only thought is how to win. All the cardinal virtues are valueless to a man who cannot do that."

Charles Delmer spoke with bitterness. But the conversation round the quiet vehicle, in

which the Pistruccis had ensconced themselves and in which they had hoped to keep Naomi from public notice, was interrupted by a personage, quite a stranger at least to Miss Worksworth, and who seemed both more anxious and most able to sink this strangeness in something even more than familiarity.

The vehicle, humble and quiet as it might be, had not escaped the attention of gayer ones. For itself and its inmates it might have done so; but when the heir to a Dukedom not only stopped for a momentary salutation but lingered near in close and lengthened conversation, magnifying thoughts, as well as glasses, were bent in that direction. Lord George, too, had been attracted thither, and had the well-known form of Charles Delmer. At length the patience of two ladies, in equipages stationed at no great distance, became quite exhausted, and they forthwith commissioned their aide-de-camp, the Honourable Fitzroy Fitzgerald, to inquire who was the young lady in the blue bonnet and fresh colour, that seemed to have such attraction for dandies so fastidious as Delmer was known, and Mr. Poyntz ought, to be. The Honourable Fitzroy felt in nowise abashed to undertake

the mission, which he commenced at once by riding up to the carriage, accosting Delmer, whom he knew, with—

“You here, Delmer? every one believes you in Downing-street!”

“I hope you will make a more sensible guess upon the Derby, Mr. Fitzgerald.”

“I never bet,” said Fitzroy, “it is too exciting. I have become a teetotaler with respect to games of chance.”

“And only play when you are sure to win,” interrupted Charles.

“No, I leave that to you politicians,” said the Honourable Fitzroy, making no bad hit at Charles, who was bent on *persiflage*. For the Honourable Fitzroy Fitzgerald was a lady-killer by profession, and was given to pretend in their hearing that he had been a very great rake, but was one no more.

“One half the field,” said Mr. Pistrucci, “would find it difficult to say what induced it to come here.”

“I declare,” said Mr. Poyntz, “I came to see the race, like an innocent juvenile, and am delighted to have found metal even more attractive.”

So pointed a confession made Charles feel

as if the colour came to his cheeks. Another incipient day-dream vanished, another vision of fortune and happiness dispelled! If Mr. Poyntz had set his admiration on Miss Worksworth and put aside all consideration of inequality of rank as that of fortune, the match was natural, too advantageous to both, too suitable in a word, for any one to attempt rival Charles, on raising his eyes, observed, thought he observed, in the countenance of Naomi, an expression as if she had read every thought, and as if she was far more pained at it, than pleased at that compliment from Mr. Poyntz, which would have been a cause of exultation and delight to most young females on that field.

"I might have guessed it to be the Madon of the Factories," exclaimed Jacobi, coming up, "who had thus attracted no less than three Adonides to her chariot. Fitzgerald, what brought you here?" said Jacobi, with considerable impudence.

"Upon my life I don't know," said Fitzgerald, with sincerity admitting that he knew not the lady.

"All-powerful instinct," said Jacobi.

"I have the honour of addressing M

Worksworth, of Worksworth," said Fitzgerald, into whose sagacious breast a ray of light had penetrated, "who ought to have been the planet of the season, instead of being the fixed star of a quiet group."

"Good-bye to your incognito, Miss Worksworth," said Charles; "Mr. Fitzgerald has got you into his firmament; and if you are not known and gazed at, observed and measured, by every lens in the great observatory of London, I am much mistaken."

"You are right, Mr. Delmer, I am most proud of having made Miss Worksworth's acquaintance, which I hope she will permit me to improve. Pistrucci is one of my oldest friends."

"Our first acquaintance is, indeed," said Mr. Pistrucci, "lost in the night of time."

"And is now recovered by the light of a new constellation," said Jacobi.

The Honourable Fitzroy having succeeded in his aim, and more than his aim, hastened to report progress to his envoys; and he congratulated himself on what he prized above anything on earth,—an introduction to an heiress. But there was nothing more to be done than establish an acquaintance in the

presence of two such lions as Charles Delmer and Jacobi. He therefore withdrew and communicated his discovery, that the lady in the blue bonnet and fresh colour, called by Mr Jacobi, the Madonna of the Factories, was no other than the heiress of all the wealth of the Worksworth's, which might be estimated at any step between forty and sixty thousand a year. The intelligence, for those to whom it was conveyed, flung Running Rein himself completely into the background. It circulated round the ropes, penetrated to the stand, and gave rise to as many rumours and conjectures as the scene of the starting-post itself could suggest.

"Well, Charles," said Jacobi, drawing of his friend, "do the ministerial arrangement include you in the cabinet?"

"I had scarcely hoped for that at first."

"Too much to expect to squeeze amongst the coronets. Well, if your foot's on the round of a good ladder."

"In truth, my dear Jacobi, I do not feel my feet under me at all."

"No room in the boat, eh?"

"The very words."

"And you'll stand it?"

"I don't adopt principles and party from spite."

"Come, now, Charles, you adopted them in the first instance, as we all do, from chance. Are we tied to the decisions of chance?"

"As good an arbiter as any. But, in truth, I could not be other than a Whig, if I would. For Peelism is a mere personal creed, and as to downright Toryism, pardon me, but it strikes me in the light of the ridiculous. How enlist in a party where you could do nothing but quiz?"

"Why be of it, and quiz it? What is the use of talent and acquirements in a party, of which every lord and every constituent pretends to know as much as yourself? Commend me to the ignorant and prejudiced; they make the only comfortable constituents and friends. You can do good with them, and through them. Depend upon it, Charles, there are but two forces in politics, the Tory and the Radical. The only impulses come from them, and the only strength, and you may do something through one or the other; but your middle, puerile, philosophic, prudent, doctrinal party, the Whigs, can never do anything.

They may carry Reform and abrogate the Corn laws by mean radical ideas, orators, and steam; they may amend the Poor-law, and reform Ireland by taking leaves from the Tory book and crouching to the aristocracy of Ireland; but they can do nothing of themselves, ~~so~~ vacillate, and depend on the parties on each side of them;—appealing to liberal sentiments and cajoling the Radicals one day, appealing to Conservatives and propitiating the ultra-Tories the next.”

“All true, Jacobi; and of which party could you not say hard and true things? For politics are universally a game of deception and manœuvre, much the same under constitutions, as it was under the regimen of courts, save that the meanness and the courtiership are addressed in different directions to the mob here, as to the monarch there. But we must take things as they are, ~~as~~ as they must be. And after all, or at least at times, we may find greatness in the one and honesty in the other.”

“You are a genuine Candide, Charles,” said Jacobi. “*Vous êtes un ange, mon cher.* But politics, count on it, demand a larger spice of the devil. And who are the young men pro-

ferred to you? for a ministry cannot be altogether made up of fogies."

"There are —— and ——."

"Used-up Radicals, that will be disowned and pelted by their own party, instead of bringing a shred of it with them. What contortions such fellows will make, grinding down their opposition acerbity into official pleasing. Why these men were not formidable as foes, and can never be useful as friends."

"There must be a show of taking men from the ultra-Liberal party, were it but as a decoy to recommend good behaviour in others."

"But would it not have been better to take one of the wild elephants, and tame him, instead of caging half-a-dozen of the smaller animals?"

"Our Premier has not nerves for a menagerie of a cabinet, and wants altogether the trick of Van Amburg, who could with impunity sit down with the lion, and put his head into the beast's mouth."

"And whom else?"

"—— and ——."

"Hacks, promising only in their subser-viency,—decent drudges. It is grateful and

considerate to provide for such men; but where is the mind, the blood, the young talent the future statesmen, to inspire, strengthen and perpetuate a party? Where are the future premiers, their future diplomatists, the colonial Lycurguses? Surely they don't think that hereditary right will make a minister or party, however it may make a sovereign?"

"Well, there is Shiel."

"An old man, fit for a peerage and a pension,—the way of shelving a veteran in Pitt's time; the best and cheapest way, too. The Irish are treated, just as the Radicals are, their invalids provided for, *pour encourager les autres* to be subservient and dull. But this will not conciliate fiery Pat, nor tranquillize obstreperous John. I tell you, Charles, that the Whigs with us resemble the party of the *ancien régime* in France. They are what our neighbours call *perruques*, which the French most justly translate, and dub them Whigs."

"We shall see your young men at work some of these days, putting quite a new face and a new score upon politics."

"At the rate you are going we certainly shall. There is no party that shows a symptom of young blood but the Protectionists. Al

others, even your very Radicals, grow anile, and seem barren of any rising generation. Meantime, Charles, you have got no place."

"*Cela viendra*—all in good time."

"And, by the by, you have not got the heiress."

"Do you think me in quest of all the good things of this earth at once?"

"Wise, if you did so, for good things are not to be had singly: they do help each other. And fortune loves to *cumuler*."

"I once had the knack of pleasing and succeeding," said Charles.

"I care little for pleasing," said Jacobi, "provided I succeed, and had much rather command it than beg it."

"What, even with the fair sex?"

"Ay, even with them."

"With a commanding fortune or a commanding position, there are female hearts that you can subdue. But I must confess I would not give much for them."

"We'll not discuss women over the ropes of Epsom race-course. But you see my friend Poyntz has taken up a rival position, which you should have secured long since."

"It would be a vain and a selfish thing of

me to attempt to secure it. Two families could not be found so completely formed each other's reparation and completion as Poyntz's and Miss Worksworth's."

"Women, since I must discuss them, give into fitnesses or conveniences. Not the rich, nor the fair, nor the brave, nor the wealthy, love each other."

"If contraries are to rush together, the lady and the gentleman cannot fail to do so. One is rich as Croesus, the other with no prospect save debt. One comes from the quest, the other from the pod of yesteryear's cotton-plant. One all-wise and all-learned as young England fresh from the university, the other but just emancipated from a C. parLOUR."

"D—— philosophizing and deluding Charles. Put money in thy purse, and the Whigs will give you office and title."

"If a woman's not worth having for herself, she never can be worth it as a stepping-stone."

"But if it prove one of her greatest pleasures to have been so? If it is an infinitely greater heart's gratification to a woman to have made the fortune of the man she

than to have purchased rank, position, or aught else, should our pride stand in the way of their most disinterested happiness?"

"This is merely making a supposition, and taking it for granted. No woman ever yet despised a strawberry leaf."

"Oh, fie, Charles! how unlike you. *I* might have said such a thing. But you must be half-way to Diogenes's tub to have indulged, even jestingly, in a sentiment you know to be false."

CHAPTER XII.

WHILST Naomi was occupied and embarrassed by those distracting perplexities which assail women in the pride of youth and beauty, especially if wealth be added to them, she found each day add rather than take from them. Mr. Poyntz seemed serious in his attentions, although Pistrucci, in his jocoseness, hinted that there might be more electioneering views in them than matrimonial. Naomi could not admit such a supposition; and it was evidently not Charles Delmer's opinion, who withdrew, from disinterestedness, before the superior pretensions of so noble and desirable a suitor. No such idea, nor indeed could any deter him, restrained Mr. Fitzroy Fitzgerald, who entered the field, armed with an amount of assurance, and obtusity, and importunity, which excited first

Naomi's wonderment, and then her impatience. In the midst of all this arrived a letter, which, whether from a suitor or not, must speak for itself. It came from George Pevensey.

"DEAR NAOMI,

"Excuse my writing to thee, and in an old familiar style. I do so at the request of sincere friends, as well as in obedience to my own strong impulse. Many here are in the habit of lamenting over you as fallen, and being given over to all the inebriety of worldliness. You know I do not share in their prejudices. But we, poor, industrious, and middle class persons, can only keep up in the world, and avoid even its indigence, by holding together; and what bond is so strong, or so salutary, as the bond of religious creed? You have broken through them, and have separated, without a misgiving, no doubt, from the religious ideas, habits, and sect of your father. The sect is about to cut you off as a rotten member. This you looked to, and care not for. But recollect, if of no import in a religious light, for souls may be saved, and persons live in piety and morality in a great many different ways, it is still important

in a worldly sense. We hold together, we combine our influence; they that are not with us are against us; and being the mistress of thousands upon thousands a-year, instead of rendering you independent of such support, puts you precisely in that lofty position in which use can be made of it. This is of not so much consequence, if you join any other fraternity. You have been amongst the aristocracy, the high people, the lords of us and of England. If they admit you as one of them, and if you share their privileges, in return for the wealth and the mind you bring them, I have nothing to say. Or you may join that other fraternity of the semi-aristocrats, the gentle and professional, which form a class apart, not very compact or friendly amongst each other, and not very independent, their principles being to ape the lord and despise the trader. Nevertheless it is a class in which a station may be taken. For myself I have a dislike to these two classes, of which the first I think destined to disappear, and the second consequently doomed to devote its powers of imitation to another model.

“I do not want to force or even to impress my opinions upon you, but expect merely to

direct your steps at this important period of life with a full knowledge of what you do. By joining either of the noble or gentle fraternities, you are quitting the sphere of your father's relatives and connexion, and you will be giving influence and power to those who look down upon the calling, the ideas, and the prospects of the industrious. You may pretend to yourself,—that you will take no part, make no new friends, or at least have no old enemies. But such exemption is denied to you. You have influence and wealth, and they must be exerted for or against the great principles that are struggling for mastery. We shall have an election in autumn, and you must be for or against this candidate or that. You must be for Poyntzstett or for Manchester. I make no account of the trimmers who manœuvre between them.

“The mildest of your father's friends say, Let Naomi not decide till she has examined. She has been to the residence of the noble, and has seen the mixed world of London, in both of which ideas of fashion and of town predominate, that are mere froth on the surface, without offering more than the shadow of a principle. Let her visit Manchester, see the

region of progress, the centre of activity, where the mind, as well as movement, of England is concentrated, where the most difficult social problems exist from the agglomeration of workers and of capitalists, and where all new necessities group round these, raising questions and solving them, like a new society nursed and full blown in the bosom of the old. I draw a glowing picture, for so it would appear to me, had I wealth, and leisure, and prosperity, to enable me to give full sympathy and attention towards it.

“ But we, Pevenseys, are unfortunately of the old industrial world, not of the new. Shuttlefield is superannuated in machinery, in ideas, and in pauperism, with struggling and nominal capitalists, as indebted now as the squires around them, and perhaps more so. Farming and manufacturing are alike lotteries with few prizes and many blanks. I have therefore, nearly resolved to emigrate with me and mine, the grandfather and the grandchildren. For the problem of existence, as well as of social and political life, becomes too difficult to solve in England. I have at times dreamed of running a political career, and of standing up in Parliament, if it were allowed

me, for the humble and industrious classes. But I should be carried too far—would break away from the narrow limits within which middle-class champions must strive; and would thus fall amidst the ignorance and insincerity which pervade the uneducated, and which make the maniac and the mountebank captivate their favour so much more easily and constantly than the wisest efforts of the honest man. I despair of the English people, and pity them, for I know that to extricate themselves from the slough, they must do violent things some day, which I would neither join, nor repress, nor witness. I have very nearly, though not decidedly, taken my resolve, which, however, does not affect the advice I give to you: for we are in positions totally different; you have duties to fulfil in this country; I have none save those that I may fairly throw off, in order to take upon me new and more genial ones in a new country.

“Your father’s friends in Manchester are most anxious for your presence, as you shall hear. You will not have to re-enter the old region. You will find the house of —— and ——, full of all social improvements and amenities; and then you may make your

adieu in friendship and good feeling from the staid old fraternity, which still respect your name. Manchester, however, is more than a sect, more than a metropolis; it is a great centre and seat of both intellect and power. See and test it, ere you turn your back on it for ever.

“ Yours, &c.

“ GEO. PEVENSEY.”

The epistle of her old friend and playmate aroused Naomi from thoughts of London, its flirtations and its excitement, to anxieties that had much occupied her, till these had fairly driven them away. Her estrangement from the friends and the class amongst whom, and in which, her parents had lived, had given her much pain, yet she knew not how to remedy or assuage it. Every day's experience, and reflection as well as amusement, rendered it more impossible, and showed it to be not only inadvisable, to return to the habits and the rigid ways in which she had been brought up. Yet she could make no compromise with the worthy people from whom she severed. They saw crime in what she considered a manly exercise of intelligence and taste. She knew they were utterly mistaken in coupling either

immorality or irreligion with this. Nay, she began to believe that the high cultivation of intellect and of taste, by giving to the mind that accumulated food which the genius of age has produced and stored up, was indispensable to the moral well-being of those to whom Providence had given wealth, thought, or leisure. She was opposed, therefore, to the asceticism of sect, as dangerous, irreligious, and even immoral. To argue all this were vain; but she was delighted at an opportunity being offered of her stating these her opinions to the neutral and less rigid, in her own former class of life and worldly pursuits.

She had other reasons for wishing to visit Manchester. Little as she knew of either noble circles or London life, notwithstanding Pevensey's accusation, she knew less of her father's layer of society, and was anxious to look into it ere plunging into any other. Perhaps all was worth and wisdom in middle and industrious circles, all vanity and folly above them. She had heard so, did not believe it, but longed to try it. She had views and tendencies in political conduct, too; more than one borough was not unlikely to consult her wishes, whilst her tenants in one county,

at least, were capable of deciding a doubtful contest. The time for decision was close at hand, and for her that decision would influence her life and fate. She should be glad then, to hear, not so much the opinions as the reasons of her friends at Manchester on the subject. However, as it was, she was still prepared, if political conduct required other rule than private sympathy and friendship ; if it ran counter to them, she was of a character to make that or any sacrifice, if needed, to a sense of duty.

George Pevensey, moreover, drew a gloomy picture of the country, of its industry and prosperity. He was a cold, reasoning man and little of an enthusiast. What he said of the difficulties of being prosperous and securing profit, Naomi perceived herself, from Mr. Plynlimon's accounts, and those of his other agents, were all full of gloom, mystery and excuses. Was the country really sinking? Were there fears that its operatives would not be employed, its capital not reproduced and augmented? She read at times such statements, and knew their partial truth, which literally turned the land into anxiety and fear. And how men of business went on under these

circumstances, seemed the courage rather of despair than calculation. If anywhere these enigmas of public and private import could be solved, it was at Manchester. She had well-nigh resolved to come forth in the metropolis in the ensuing season, with all the *éclat* that her wealth and position afforded. She determined on this, not for the indulgence of mere vanity, but to reserve for herself a will and a conviction in her acts. "People in retirement," thought she, "are the slaves of the active, and the mere football of events. It is only in the world that knowledge is procured, connexions formed, and independence exercised."

CHAPTER XIII.

CHARLES DELMER was in the meantime absorbed in the anxieties of the ministerial crisis. Things had not yet reached that advanced stage of arrangement at which the fate of subordinates comes to be decided. The magnates themselves were not yet fully agreed; and antipathies and rivalries of various kinds, hitherto concealed in courtesy, broke forth when about to embark in a new administration. The Whigs, notwithstanding their invocation of the popular breeze, and its having blown so powerfully and benignly on their sails, had still succeeded in grasping power under Tory sovereigns only by their alliance with the Tory semi-Liberals. Lord Grey, indeed, had refused to rule under, or even in conjunction with, any person of semi-Tory influence; but his good-humoured successor

had contrived so to smooth down the seams, which served as demarcations of different parties, that they became less perceptible.

At his death, the chief place devolved naturally to the leader of the House of Commons : there was no peer of standing, activity, and ambition, who could then dispute the chiefdom. Yet it was impossible to conceive two men more differing, or two characters more contrasted, than the late Premier and the one who succeeded him. The veteran who had contrived to stand at the head of the Liberals during a long and most critical period, had been a man of the world and of society, fond of its pleasures, and ruling his party as a host might his guests, or a good fellow his friends. His successor was more a man of the closet, who had spent no small portion of his time with his books and thoughts, and who in his youth had shone as a writer, whilst his predecessor had shone as a gallant and a courtier. Still, the ex-premier, however good a courtier, was a bluff and a frank one, such as pleased the tar, William the Fourth, more than it would have suited the Fourth George. This apparent and often assured rudeness of Lord Debonnaire, accompanied by a frequent weak-

ness of will, made some one say of him that he was *Fortiter in modo, et suaviter in re*. The new Premier was bland, because his nature was mild; but he was neither courtier, nor boon companion, nor gallant, nor wit. The ex-premier had gleaned his political knowledge, like Talleyrand, from converse with the world and with his fellow-men; the new one read history, and reflected on it, and explained it, and drew from it high ideas of a statesman's task. The ex-premier was greatly beloved, and nothing jaloused by those under him. So he listened to all, and all had influence over him, but not for purposes of party and malignity. Moreover, the great latitude to each in his department, which gave rise to individualism, was likely to prove insupportable and impossible under any other premier than my Lord Debonnaire.

Under the old Whig administration, for instance, Lord Tiverton, who had got prescriptive possession of the Foreign Office, was allowed to manage Europe, Asia, and America, as he listed, and to make ducks and drakes of the majority and might of England. In this, his wielding of the sceptre, many things had been happily achieved, but many risks

incurred. The gravest part of the matter was, that a kind of personal quarrel had sprung up between Lord Tiverton and the Ulysses of the Tuilleries. This threatened so seriously to counteract and denaturalize Whig policy altogether, and leave England isolated under their sway, that serious objections to Lord Tiverton's resuming the Foreign Office were made,—objections which there was no longer a Lord Debonnaire to silence and smooth over.

The generous nature of the new Premier was, however, as great a safeguard and support to Lord Tiverton as Lord Debonnaire's friendship. For, however obliged to confess the dangers and inconveniences that the objectors alleged, it was impossible not to admit that the origin of the quarrel did not lie in any malignancy or waywardness of the English minister, but in the illiberal backslidings and tendency of the Frenchman. Ulysses wanted to provide for a younger son, by filching a Spanish heiress for him, and Lord Tiverton opposed the scheme. To make the English minister a victim to the selfish enmity of a foreign potentate was bad policy, and unmanly conduct. The new Premier

would not hear of it. But their difference convulsed the embryo cabinet, and left poor Charles in sad distress.

At last the posts, the numbers, and the balancing influences of the *Dii majores* of the ministerial Olympus being fixed, the almost as difficult business came of filling the subordinate offices. Each party, each man, had its friend to push. Rising men, strong in popular support, knocked at one door of the Cabinet, with more rudeness than was pleasing to the members of that establishment; whilst the aristocracy knocked at another door, demanding admittance for its friends, or rather its offspring, in a voice almost as imperative. The greatest boon in a minister's gift, is certainly the *apprentissage* to office. Let a man have once possession of official experience, let him have served in important however subordinate functions,—let him command a seat in parliament, and have the privilege of expressing himself,—he can force his way. No minister, or obstacle, save his own imprudence or impertinence, can bar him. But without the official experience, without the initiation into the machinery of government, politicians are in England mere children; and the cleverest

men may be defied, and mocked, and put down in a debate, by the dullest.

People complain that the Radicals have not produced a statesman. It may be true. But it is because Whigs and Tories have never given them a chance: these have got the school-house, with the primer, dictionary, and elements of the profession; and they keep the door closed as carefully as that of the Mint. On coming into office, the Whigs have often asked the Radicals what they would have; and the *sicis*, i.e. the simpletons of Radicals, have asked for some measure,—the penny postage, or some other piece of twaddle,—to serve the public. Why did they not ask for secretaryships, or even under-secretaryships, for their very selves? Only conceive what Molesworth could be, had he been Under-Secretary for the colonies; or Cobden, had he been Under-secretary of the Treasury. No fiddle-faddle minister, Whig or Tory, could have stood a week against them.

The gift, therefore, of political *apprentissage* is one of the greatest that a Premier can bestow. And of course the clamorous demands of the aristocracy are greatest for it. Nor is this unnatural. They are excluded from most

professions, and think they may monopolize the diplomatic and the political. Hapless and hopeless, then, is the ambition of the dozen clever individuals, who, like Charles Delmer, having gained some reputation as debaters and politicians, demand a place in which they can be useful. For such men there are plenty of places offered, in which they would have nothing to do, and which would lay them on the shelf and close their career.

There is a post that all young politicians desire,—that of secretary for the sister kingdom. It is almost an independent ministry with viceroys such as viceroys ought to be used to be. Then Ireland is a *terra incognita* where routine may be set aside, and something new achieved. The task of governing such a country at all is, moreover, so difficult that any degree of success in it secures a man a reputation. There are, to be sure, equal greater chances of failure; but what sanguine man looks on that side of the picture? Castlereagh, Wellington, Peel, Stanley, had made that office their great school of politics and stepping-stone to power. And a disastrous effect it has upon young and liberal politicians, Torifying them almost as much

a government might in either the East or West Indies. A certain cast is always given to the administrative mind when it has a nigger race to govern, or one which cannot get possession of liberty without making a perverse use of it.

Charles's day-dream was to be Secretary for Ireland. But, unfortunately for him, a nobleman equally ambitious, was anxious to rule and regenerate Ireland as its Viceroy. A clever and independent Secretary by his side would have been *de trop*,—and Charles saw that day-dream evaporate. Then the post of Colonial Secretary would have suited him. But another noble of great name was anxious to illustrate himself and make his political reputation by working wonders with the colonies; and he wanted a man of humility, of vigour, and of indefatigable industry, to help, not to overshadow him. So Charles had no chance there.

Lord Tiverton was not fond of young *élèves* about him. The science of governing and managing Europe, whilst humbling its sovereigns, was one that he liked to practise single-handed, and that he desired no one to practise after him. Like great English artists,

who always bury with them the knowledge and proficiency they acquire, scorning to communicate them to a disciple, so Lord Tiverton would teach his trade to no apprentice; so that whenever he stumbled, he found no friend or disciple to defend or help him. He depended in the hour of need upon volunteers and amateurs: Charles was too clever to have a chance of thrusting his nose into Lord Tiverton's office.

Then there was the India Board. But the profound and solemn President of that Board it was known, made a point of never consulting, of never even making use of his subordinates. The veteran official had had, indeed a succession of the most able young politicians in the country for Secretaries. But he never would consult any of them, would not ask them, would not let them look at a paper and he kept the knowledge and experience of his office quite as much to himself as he did its patronage. Really, it is surprising, that some young Whig aspirants after office and knowledge did not hang themselves out in sheer spite and despair, on finding themselves put under such a jealous and stupid owl.

Then there was the Board of Trade. E

statistics were not Charles's forte,—although that were scarcely a bar. The Admiralty had long been a retreat for the wit and the scribe; but an able and daring Radical had escalated that from the first day, and had entrenched himself there. Charles had paid great attention to the education question, and was one of those who had made the most brilliant and fruitless speeches on the subject. But ministers were then only smuggling education into the rank of a public office and a public expense,—it was to do a great deal, and to cost nothing. The direction was to be done gratis by an old minister otherwise endowed; the Parliamentary work was to be done by any one; and the office work by some unknown and unacknowledged capable. Charles was not anxious to fill gratuitously the post of an official, whose task it was to infringe on the Church without offending the Churchmen, and offer aid to the Dissenters without awakening their suspicions or hurting their pride.

The ministerial overthrow and reconstruction thus proved to Charles Delmer a very game of blind-man's-buff, in which he seemed condemned to remain eternally blinded, running against obstacles which he had not

foreseen, and embracing as acquaintances those who totally ignored him. He had no enemies. None denied his talents, worth, acquisition to the party: but, somehow or other, there was always some far inferior and some even generally less liked person, who was preferred to him for each place. How was this, thought Charles; it must be my own fault; for everything has its reason in this world? Was it that he had not attached himself individually to some one magnate or *chef de file*? But to have done so would have implied the joining in those paltry rivalries and divisions, that distracted the party. Was it that his petulance alarmed the circumspect? But he had almost abdicated his liberal enthusiasm, and had refrained from those appeals to popular passions, of which he was master, in order that he might rank in the regular Whig moderate party. He had assumed the discreet tongue of an official, without the responsibility of office; and his reward seemed likely to be oblivion by his party, as well as by the public. Charles thought of his mother, and of the profession which she had so ambitiously thrust him into—a profession of which so much may be made by a man independent, reckless, and

ignorant of it; but so ungrateful to the man that loves, or studies, or pursues it with all his hopes, heart, and faculties.

Charles, with his discontent, penetrated to the Premier, who was too much absorbed in high and weighty considerations, to be very attentive to little things, or considerate to little men. He had been so tortured and *tracassé* by pretensions, that his impulse was to beat them down ruthlessly. Charles revered the statesman far more than he loved the man; and he in return, valued the debater, but feared the interference of the wit.

"I wish sincerely, Delmer," said the Premier, "that the boat was larger; but it is filled, you see, almost before one is aware."

"I have no ambition to thrust myself amongst the company," said Delmer, "unless you think me worthy to pull an oar."

"You do not suppose that the framer of a ministry has merely the delightful task of choosing the fittest from capacity to fill each place, Mr. Delmer? The constitutional machine is worked by influence,—so many influence-power, your engineer would say,—and we must combine them."

"I cannot but think, my lord," said Charles,

firmly, "that the most salutary and effective influence is that exercised by a post ably filled administration skilfully conducted."

"Very true, Sir, though sharp. But I have not the *carte blanche* that Sir Robert Peel had for example, who can compose a ministry of all his talents, and get his great backers to feed contentedly on sinecures."

"It is no doubt his great advantage," said Charles, dryly.

"But Whigs are Whigs, Mr. Delmer, and cannot be changed; and Whiggism is based on a permanent influence, whereas Peelism, appealing to the aristocracy one day, to the middle classes the next, the people at another time, is a party, as the French say, *en l'air*. It is a boat for one voyage, which one voyage Peelism has already performed; and the best that the captain can do, would be to pay off his crew. Whereas the Whigs have a permanent establishment, rooted in the soil, the old families, the old traditions, and in a position to assimilate and make use of all the standing influences of the country. But there is a difficulty in managing and combining this strength; and allowances should be made for any one who undertakes the task—allow

ances to which the head of a transition party, like Sir Robert Peel's, can lay no claim."

In the plea which he had to urge, Charles could desire no better than to introduce the example of Peel, so unfettered in his choice of able colleagues and fit subordinates; but he could not have dared himself to approach such an allusion or argument. The Premier himself fell into it, eagerly and unwittingly pouring forth the excuses and refutations which had risen in his mind against the accusations most generally and popularly made against him. Delmer, however, avoided the delicate subject that his illustrious interlocuter dwelt upon, and said, that he put forth claims merely on the ground of assiduity and devotion to the cause. These, he thought, entitled him to place, and to his being enabled to take some step in a career which otherwise became to him mockery and ruin. A man of large and independent fortune might keep, on this ground alone, his position as a public character; but the man who had abandoned the part of playing tribune, and thus estranged himself from popular support, whilst on the other his party showed no confidence in him, and gave him no rank amongst them, would be obliged

to forsake politics altogether, or else strike out some individual path or special object for himself.

"And prosper, as a thorn in the ministerial side, like Horsman and Lord Duncan."

Charles protested.

"Why not play out the radical game?" continued the great man, hardening in his irony. "There are men who make a good thing of it, who earn a mighty reputation by daring the recreant Whigs, and denouncing the Family Compact; and when they have done so, come to demand place as a reward. They come to demand it, arrayed with all the smiles of friendship. These lions can roar gently upon consideration. These gentlemen are always stretching forth the hand at one moment to threaten and the next to beg; and, upon my life, we are often obliged to compromise with them."

"Whether your words be serious or ironical," said Charles, rising out of humility "I must say I find your lordship more gay than considerate, and more witty than polite. Have I ever given reason to be so addressed?"

"Nay, Delmer; no anger. Pardon me; I have allowed myself to draw a general por

trait that has neither resemblance nor connexion with you. But such duties as those of last week try temper, and diabolize a man. No one need be a poet to become a Mephistopheles. A first week of premiership would do it better than Goethe and Byron together. But, in sober truth, there is no post possibly vacant worthy of your talents. Would you try administration abroad? I cannot give you the Irish to try your powers of conciliation upon, but there are the Ionians; a reputation might be made by teaching them the nature of constitutional government."

"You adjourn my ambition, I see, to the Greek Kalends. If I have any talent, it is to deal with Englishmen. Beyond our shores, liberty and reform can only be taught and achieved with the bayonet. I must decline making use of such a schoolmaster."

"Patience, then, and confidence, is all that can recommend."

CHAPTER XIV.

In one of those sequestered nooks that are still to be found within an hour or two of the noisy metropolis, stood a cottage, such as a youthful pair might dream of inhabiting for ever; the *ever* extending a very vague distance into the expanse of time. It was very small, and, in feature, had little to boast; but a careful and a tasteful hand had evidently been employed in giving its smallness the appearance of size, and tricking out its ugliness with countless creepers and roses, so that neither the shelter over the windows, nor the original architecture of the cottage could be seen. Though humble, it was not surrounded by the humble, but stood under the shadow of park walls,—nay, looked into a vast park itself, with its line of beeches, and straggling oaks, and herds of deer, courting the shade, or browsing

amongst the fern. A forester, one would say, had built it; and then a high road having been driven by modern improvements past its door, the forester, you would again say, had abandoned and left it to some less rude occupant. The conjecture would have been about the truth.

There was woman's hand upon all those flowers and casements, and woman's form amongst them, pure and lovely, but not young. The figure, indeed, might have befitted youth; nor was there a silver thread amongst the ebon locks; but years and cares had pulled in all directions the muscles of that fair face, as a busy crew might do the cordage of a vessel during a weary and hard voyage. There had been a sad succession of cares—cares of the girl, troubles of the wife, anxieties of the mother, none of them few, none of them spared, all, or the traces of all still visible, with Christian resignation and mortal pride, illumed as best they could, shining through, and supporting a soul which, without them, must have sunk under half the burden.

A young man, handsome when seen alone, but an unhandsome likeness of that lady, opened the outside gate, and closed it behind

him with a jerk, as he would shut out the world that he had left in coming to this sequestered spot. He met his mother's very anxious and hurried queries with a jest and a smile, which was very far from satisfying, or allaying her parental anxiety.

"Nothing new, Charles?"

"No."

"Nor hopeful?"

"Plenty,—a very great abundance of the hopeful," said Charles; "a great deal of room for it."

"As every place must be filled by this time," said Mrs. Delmer, "I do not see what room there is for hope, if there is no ground for certainty."

"Oh, mother," said Charles, "the halls of Whiggery are paved with good intentions."

"Charles, Charles, you must have played your cards badly. My poor boy!"

"There, now, it is all my want of address."

"You are a bad courtier, that I know. But it is no reason why you should have been overlooked."

"Mother, what think you of a colonial berth, a quiet place, an abundant income with wise economy, a farewell to the anxieties of

life, with room for all its pleasures—books, dreams, and intellectual indolence?"

"Exile and extinction, intellectual syncope, physical exhaustion. Life, Charles, is not life in the colonies."

"One can return, wealthy, independent, provided."

"Of what avail without youth? for ten colonial years are thirty English ones to the constitution, and fifty to the mind. To return and see youngsters grasp prizes by merely stretching out the hand, and fools rise prosperous in the very career you have abandoned."

"Very mortifying; but no success here, with a cool, long, idle stare at poverty in the face, as at an unwelcome bride to whom fate has betrothed you."

"It is impossible; Charles," said Mrs. Delmer, rising, and checking mental agitation by walking to and fro. "There are fifty persons who contrive to make a fortune every day; that trick the public, or bully the minister; that strike fortune as a spark from the most vulgar flint,—a race, an idea, a speculation."

"I'll be bound they are all vulgar men, for

whom their mothers never dreamed fortune, said Charles.

"Do you mean that nothing is ever attained that is ever aimed at, and that crowns never fall except upon heads that do not expect them, and never sought for them?"

"Exactly," said Charles.

"And that fortune is a witch, who loves to disappoint the ambitious and exalt the imbecile!"

"Pretty nearly correct," said Charles.

"In that case the world is governed by such unaccountable genii as those we read in the Arabian Nights."

"We shall gain nothing, dear mother, by examining into the nature and divinity of fortune. I can devise no better modes of propitiating her than those I have followed. The question is, whether to abandon the pursuit or persevere in it."

"You are weary of it, Charles."

"Death weary."

"Don't employ that word. It is I who have thrust you upon this thorny and flinty road, and, Heaven knows, I suffer in every difficulty, every pang. Yet is there a path in the world worth following, Charles, for one like you, but this, the highest?"

"An Alpine path, mother, repaying toil with sublimity; and where toil is delightful and difficulties nothing, as long as the wayfarer has strength and hopes, but when he lags—"

"But he should never lag, Charles."

"True, he should not; for then his chance is to break his neck in a leap, or perish of hunger and exhaustion so high above all human sympathy and aid."

"You abandon the attempt, Charles, at the first serious disappointment."

"Great people laugh at those who follow the politician's trade without fortune, and love to punish and to baulk them."

"And who knows you to be without fortune? Have we not borne ourselves gallantly? Who dare suppose us with less than competence."

"*Tout se sait*, mother; in a certain world every one knows everything of his neighbour, or guesses it, which comes to the same point."

"Then talent is never to make way without wealth."

"The attempt is never pardoned until it has proved completely successful. Such presumption is like treason in this respect. A

week ago I was a rising man; I am nothing but an ambitious fool."

"And if you fly off to a colonial what will people say?"

"Oh, they may then write my epitaph shall be past the reach of praise or blame."

"Every word you say, Charles, is to me."

"Mother!"

"For I have brought you to this. I have set you to climb, and set you to run a race, and you were yet but a child; and I have imbrued your flagging spirit still to soar."

"And were I to lay down my mother, as I have so great a mind to do," said Charles, "you would break your head."

Mrs. Delmer could not but look full at him.

"Then we will not lay down the world," continued her son, smiling, "but flap our pinion vigorously, until—"

"Who are the people in that carriage?" said Mrs. Delmer; "they are in search of some house or person, and have peeped here two or three times."

"I should know that face," said Charles, as he opened the door, and advanced to the gate.

It was Miss Worksworth and Mr. Pistrucci.

"You must alight and come in," said Charles, after a warm because unexpected greeting; "I want to introduce you to my mother."

The introduction and the greetings took place, the surprise was over, the pleasure permanent. Naomi and her friend were engaged in the search after a cottage but lately occupied in the vicinity, they understood, by some inhabitant of Worksworth, whom they had a particular wish to find out. It appeared to Charles, that respecting the object of their search, they preferred making a confidant of his mother than talking to him on the subject. So that after a time, Mrs. Delmer having put her knowledge of the hamlet at her new friend's disposal, they sallied out together, leaving Charles to chew the cud of political disappointment, somewhat sweetened by the strange chance or purpose that had brought Miss Worksworth to his mother's acquaintance and abode. He had heard enough to know that it was an anonymous letter which guided Naomi in her research. It was one, he felt, that against whomsoever directed, boded at least him no harm.

It transpired afterwards, that the object of Miss Worksworth's search was the daughter of a blind old man, who had been attached to Mr. Worksworth. The daughter, a handsome girl, employed in the factory, had been enticed from it and from her father, by some means or other. And no trace could be found. An anonymous letter indicated the vicinity of where Mrs. Delmer lived as the place of her retreat. But all efforts of Miss Worksworth failed in obtaining any trace or clue. Mrs. Delmer however promised, by the aid of the postman, to ascertain whether any new comers had lately come into the neighbourhood; and, on receiving the list of them, with the information required, she undertook to find out, and make known to Naomi, whether any one answering the description of the Worksworth fugitive had settled, and under whose wing, in those suburban parts.

The subject fortunately occupied the two ladies, and made them known to each other in a more unembarrassed manner than if they had either but indifferent topics to discuss, or else a subject so delicate as the political changes and appointments of the day, and the part that Charles was destined to take or not

ke in them. Mrs. Delmer found Naomi disguisedly anxious about her son's success, d most unfeignedly indignant at his premed disappointment. Charles himself, however, shrunk from even tolerating the mention such a subject before Miss Worksworth, d turned it off, when his mother dragged it with a mingled lightness and bitterness, t showed it to be a subject too disagreeable be pursued. Charles even ceased the galtry and *empressement* which he had at first wn. If he had withdrawn some time since n his attentions to Naomi, before the lordly sence of Mr. Poyntz, how much more fixed st he be in such a resolution when fortune l stricken from under him the only ground which he stood.

Naomi, on her part, was far too generous l disinterested to make her interest for arles Delmer contingent on his coming ward in the character of a minister. She lly admired him as a politician, as a young m who had ventured into public life on the ngs of talent, and had all the qualities to ay the highest part, were he not barred by hat she considered the injustice and malevo- nce of others. She remembered Mr. Jacobi's

advice,—that the only way to place Charles Delmer in a way to secure place, was to make him the representative of a powerful interest. Her influence in the coming elections might do this, but scarcely without placing herself in direct opposition and enmity with the Poyntz family, and breaking with them altogether. Charles himself seemed not to demand this sacrifice; and such chivalry in his behalf might be ill-construed as well as ill-repaid. Besides, it decided the great question of the party and the class into whose scale whatever influence she possessed was to be thrown. And George Pevensey was not the only monitor who urged her suspending so important a resolution, until it could be taken with a full knowledge of the merits, consequences, and circumstances.

CHAPTER XV.

MANCHESTER has, more than any other place, the fault that England in general has ; at least the fault which foreigners, and all who come to study it, find to mar their endeavours. You may see men in public, or arrive with great pains at seeing them in the quiet repose of their families ; but there is no medium, there is no saloon, no social and indoor *forum*, where those of both sexes who had ideas to intercommunicate (and they are many), could do so without display, or restraint, or affectation. This is springing up indeed, and as it should, under eminent female auspices. The literary and intellectual Manchester, cannot fail to be a social one ; but as yet, at the time of our story, it was not so. Religious rigidity sealed numbers of mouths,—closed a world of wealthy houses. In order to know anything

of their sentiments, in order to procure reprobation, Naomi had to enter the each Puritan convent, and immure herself a week. Even then four-and-twenty frost held the inmates; and it was after a lapse of outward familiarity that inward began, by the thawing of a mass of prejudice and repulsion. At a dinner party, it was a thing unknown even in those latitudes where it did women were as jealously excluded as banquet in ancient Rome or modern Constantinople.

In order, therefore, to catch a glimpse of the great tribunes of the day,—of those who had fought the great battle of Free Trade against rent, and won it by making the proudest living statesmen stoop, on another, their shoulders to the yoke,—these men, Naomi was obliged to interest herself to get smuggled into a corner of the Free Trade Hall. “In a country so diffident of private opinion,” said Naomi, “I shall there behold the great public orators.”

She went, and beheld that most interesting of all sights—an excited, up-gazing, restless crowd of human faces. She heard the p

and spirit of *apropos* that marked the ing discourse of the president, and then ed to the great orators of the piston and lle. Unfortunately, the theme upon which speakers expatiated for the moment was me which stirred the masses. No ques- of food or wages was touched upon. r would not do Protection the honour of ing it as formidable. The subject of dis- e was the prodigality of Government,—a iginality shown in warlike armaments and ent diplomacy, instead of the country ving and lying down quietly as a lamb, the other lamb-like countries of the world. as impossible to develop a theme with ingenuity, eloquence, and force. But of those present cared for standing armies, ere inclined to revolt against extravagance penditure? The artizans cared as little uch expenditure as Naomi herself. They middle-class orators addressing a lower- audience with middle-class arguments t economy and peace, which might have some weight addressed to dealers and to ers, but which to honest artizans was *caviare*. Still the crowd applauded; murmured intelligence when certain pro-

found truths on the subject of Russian or French amicability were propounded them. But the whole thing was a sham in despite of apparent enthusiasm, there really no sympathy; and both classes persuaded themselves they were making a demonstration, whilst in truth the orators were idly wasting their lungs, and the audience vainly screwing their attention to a sticking point that would not stick. Mr. Bright came nearest to the topics and that language which stir the popular mind, when he depicted every man and every idea of the middle class shut out of influence, repudiated from place,—the grasping at everything, and scarcely deigning to throw a sop to industrious wealth. The artisan mob understood this; but understood also that it was a middle, not a lower class complaint.

And yet how easy would it have been how tempting was it for these powerful organs of tongue and brain, to turn to topics and employ arguments that would have carried that popular mass along with them, kind and enthusiastic. Sentiments, argument and topics must indeed have suggested them

to every speaker, that would have at once answered such a purpose,—nay, must have intruded upon his tongue. But no,—everything of the kind was rejected, not one dangerous allusion was allowed to pass the lips. In no other country in the world could popular oratory show such command over itself,—in none could the ardent seekers for power thus circumscribe their seeking of it, not only within constitutional, but within conservative limits. Tories babble about the destructiveness of English radicalism, whilst its freedom and forbearance, and even self-denial of that which would give it eloquence and power, forms in truth one of the many wonders of the Anglo-Saxon world.

An opportunity was secured of making Naomi Worksworth known to those celebrated men, who will occupy a much larger place in future than they do in present estimation. The most remarkable of them was, without doubt or contestation, Richard Cobden. There are few persons of so original an aspect; pale, bright-eyed, with high cheek-bones, lofty forehead, lengthened chin, with one of those lithe figures that are overborne by a gigantic mind, and bend elastically beneath it. Cobden was

not born to subdue the world with his eloquence ; for though the oil be there to furnish a flame of any brilliancy and dimensions, the burner is of limited diameter, and the passage between it and the reservoir which should supply it, sadly choked. There are more clogs, as well as physical clogs, and modesty and hesitation, though one would so little suspect it, as often arrests or straightens the voice of Cobden, as weakness of organ. But warmth of feeling and the irresistible flow of ideas will burst through every obstacle. And since there is no way of captivating a British public save by addressing it, even those whose character is reflective, and whose genius is closet and a cabinet one, are compelled to turn their efforts into that channel.

The great charm of Cobden is his putting his mind on an immediate level with that of those whom he addresses ; he does not wait to overwhelm or to dazzle, or to trick, but to state a plain case in a plain way, as if he thought the justice of it irresistible. He always supposes that the persons he addresses have common sense ; a large assumption, no doubt. But a man does fall back upon his common sense when it is so appealed to. And

then follows in Cobden the happiness of illustration, and the wonderful ingenuity of finding a striking and unexpected argument in behalf of what, without it, the audience were too lazy either to affirm or deny.

Cobden has one great fault for an orator, or indeed for a politician; that is, originality. Public men, and public talkers, ought never to go out of the common track—like writers or poets. They should never attempt to be original, or to have ideas exclusively their own. It is brave, but not prudent. In the great corn-law movement Cobden rose in the current, and swam with all the rest of the liberals; and he was sufficiently distinguished from all by the power of his stroke and the arrow-like rapidity of his speed: he has wandered since into eddies and by-currents, has been whirled round and round by little whirlpools, in which there is no danger of drowning, indeed, but of which the circular motion merely leads back to where it starts from. It is, no doubt, hard to get astride a good and strong idea; and dangerous to get astride of none: better sleep and be forgotten, however, than ride and agitate for nothing.

Cobden was born for administration. With

a clear head, a methodical judgment, an acute discernment, office would have opened to him a world in which he must have proved eminently useful. Inexorable to traditional abuses, to job and to humbug, Cobden might have been inconvenient to aristocratic colleagues, but he would have saved them from what they have not the courage or the power to save themselves. That the English system of government could not have grasped and utilized such a man, is a disgrace to that system, and a condemnation of the parties who uphold it. That Mr. D'Israeli should have found his way into the councils of his sovereign by ultra-Toryism and Mr. Cobden with equal talents, been excluded from those councils by Liberalism, proves that the managers of the Liberal interest have not performed the most vital of the duties, that of discerning, seizing, and utilizing the power and talents placed at their disposal.

There is some excuse to the great Liberal leaders for not having swallowed and assimilated John Bright. He would have afforded materials far more repugnant to the Whig stomach, and more difficult of digestion. Far more a man of class than Cobden, who is *sui generis*

Bright represents, better than any speaker that England had for a long time heard, the sentiments of that political and religious dissent against the English Church and State, which runs through nine-tenths of the middle classes, and which is sympathised in by thousands, who do not openly repeat and join it. Whilst Cobden's features and expression indicate originality, Bright's simply indicate the class to which he belongs,—the sleek and prosperous men of industry and business, who stand up in their shrewdness, independence, and success, and demand why any other class should pretend to dictate to them, push them aside, or tread upon their toes.

As the middle class of England are but half emancipated, semi-independent, with the stigma of social and political inferiority still unerased from their brow, the reproaches addressed by Bright stir up a pride that is but half-awakened, and that timidly measures the boldness and questions the risk, ere proceeding to the full length of supporting their champion, on any other than matured subjects. The time is coming, however, when the middle class will be open to other appeals than those of fiscal justice and local questions. And then the ideas

of Bright and Cobden may prevail in other matters than those of statistics and finance. If Bright has not Cobden's originality of mind, he has all that physical power, so requisite for a great orator, which Cobden does not possess. He also thinks more in public, and with the public. His own instinct prompts him to eschew questions, in which the mass of the middle class are not likely to be stirred and to follow him. Thus, though a Quaker, he was not prominent as a member of the Peace party; nor, though a water-drinker, has he ever come forward as the apostle of temperance. If this marks Bright as superior in prudence to Cobden, it stamps the latter, in some instances, of a more ardent and sincere enthusiasm.

From the unfortunate antagonism of the Radicals to Lord Palmerston, and their deprecating all interference, and even sympathy in behalf of the struggles of foreign nations for liberty, one might set down Cobden as a cold and selfish, at least, as too exclusively national a politician. But his sympathies for Hungary, noble and deep felt, carried Cobden away above the humble level of his principles, and led him into inconsistencies both of word and

act, which, however they may affect the character of the politician, enhance and ennoble that of the man.

In her conversations with these eminent men, and those who supported them, Naomi perceived that their idea for the time was to found a party. Although they had virtually carried free trade in corn, yet their aristocratic rivals had torn away no small portion of the renown, and monopolized all the profit. And instead of either gratitude or respect being secured to them from the old Liberal party, it treated them with, if possible, more marked contempt. The Manchester chiefs ought to avenge this wrong, and repair their own neglect of personal weight and importance, by the formation of a party. It was a difficult matter, for there was no kind of cohesion or connexion between the scattered limbs of the Radical body. Those who counted as much in parliament, were rather waifs from all other classes and parties, than men regularly put forth by any homogeneous party in the nation. There were discontented squires, discontented placemen, some men of business who had made their fortunes, and who, wanting to build them by some political reputation, took to

radicalism and a radical constituency to do this for them ; and there were men of sharpness, who had not made their fortunes in business, who wished to make it in politics, but who could get into politics by no other gate than the radical one. Then there were the fanatically religious radicals, the political radicals, who kept religion apart from politics, and the radicals who thought religion an incumbrance and a stumbling-block. How embark your Baineses and your Benthames in the same boat ? Then there were universal suffragemen, led by a gentleman who had bought in Rag-fair the threadbare cloak of Henry Hunt. How adjoin a personage with a standard of this kind to the master manufacturer, who had wit enough to perceive, that if they were dependent on Cobden for political influence, they would have no power to command labour for commercial purposes !

Moreover, there is no possibility of forming a party in England, except with a view to place ; and as the Radicals *had* got individually within view of that, but *had not* got in view of it collectively, the formation of a party would prove not a facility, but an obstruction. Moreover, the Radicals were not rich enough

to defray the necessary expenses of a party. They could not support a club; their single patronage would not sell a paper. Rich men accepted their compliments, nay, got into parliament on the backs of the Radicals, but they were very loth to come down with more than mere dribblets of cash, even for that party and that cause which had given them political status. It was hoped that some religious parties, especially Naomi's friends, would be sufficiently propitiated by the preachment of universal peace, to contribute their millions towards those economical proposals, which was to starve every war establishment. But the politics of drab are small, timid, pusillanimous, and infantine, at least in this country. Not formidable as foes, they are daily becoming more worthless as friends. Thus the contemplated party, which of all others required most friends, found themselves with least. Some purist reader will here perhaps exclaim, How is it that a popular party should require the means of corruption? Surely the politicians who exist for the people and by the people, have no need of a budget to pay their way with it. Alas! go and ask the Reform Associations. Without knowing much of them,

or being of their counsels, one may know at least this, that even they cannot stir without money; that popularity is to be had with money; that enthusiasm cannot be got up, or agitation carried on, without money; and that even public meetings, convened for the dearest interests of the people, will still require some five hundred pounds expenditure to induce those deeply interested, as naturally patriotic people, to come together. To talk of the danger of democracy in England, when it requires a large expenditure of capital to get the people to assemble, in order to make even a show of democracy, is certainly one of the most egregious humbugs of the itinerant school of politicians.

The most formidable of all parties, however, is that which is not organized, and which identifies itself, rather than separates from, the great mass of popular opinion—which like a polypus, has no certain or definite outline to distinguish itself from the mass to which it adheres. If eminent and talented men would take up such a position as this carefully abstain from party, and exert themselves quietly to direct public opinion, without driving, or thwarting, or startling it, by ex

travagant theses — if they would carefully avoid the assuming, or indulging in, the pretensions of political party, and would be contented to lie tranquil in oblivious and unexcited times, they might on the right occasion assume the most prominent and powerful of leads.

The chiefs of the Manchester school were, however, animated by no such ideas as these. Their anxiety was, to form a band apart,—to establish distinction, if not separation. They wanted the public to consider them as a party, to contemplate and to trust them; and the old party having achieved its task of carrying free trade, the new party was forthwith to set about something else, in obedience to the generally received law, that a political personage or party which ceases to do something great, ceases to live. It is a terrible and self-destructive law, this modern maxim of political progress, or rather of perpetual motion, which allows neither minister nor politician to rest, even when the public itself is bent on repose, and which imposes the sad necessity of agitation even at times when the body to be agitated has very doggedly put on its night-cap, and gone to sleep.

What pained Naomi was the hatred of these politicians for the Whigs. She had before then given her own influence, and promised that of her friends, for Charles Delmer; but she found the politician of her choice as much shunned by the Radicals for his moderation, as blamed by the Whigs for past Radicalism. Because he had but too naturally doubted of the progress of 1831 and 1832 being continuous, and because, Lord Durham no more, he despaired of reforming the House of Lords, or bringing down the Irish Church, they deemed him lukewarm and time-serving. They regarded him as the mere follower of the aristocratic Whigs, because he would not vote for reducing the army, flinging off the colonies, and taxing the Chancellor of the Exchequer's budget, by simply drawing stroke of pen across a quarter of the sum total.

Naomi saw that she could never agree with these personages, or consent to adopt their smaller and temporary views, however she might share their large views for the elevation of the people. She could never bring herself to agree with Manchester, no more than with Poyntzett.

CHAPTER XVI.

ALL great things, all the great strides of humanity, the great achievements, great developments, great revolutions, have been the result of crowding and condensing mankind. To build a pyramid, conquer a quarter of the globe, found an empire by sea or land,—all these must proceed from congregations of individuals, out of whose very mass and pressure come forth deeds and ideas, great, new, and startling in their effects and influence. The masses, indeed, often perish by this condensation, massacred, starved; or suffocated; but even upon the very pile of dead, humanity contrives to elevate itself. This is true of other fields than fields of battle. The great city is as pregnant with destruction and with greatness as the great camp. When Frenchmen congregate, destruction and destructive ideas seem infallibly to come of it. When

Englishmen condense, they work equal changes, greater wonders ; but in their changes, renovation keeps pace with destruction. The organizing principle puts together faster than the disorganizing one puts asunder : we are ever in our convulsions a conservative race.

The most gigantic condensation of men is, no doubt, in our metropolitan regions. It is, however, a condensation of arms and stomachs, tongues and eyes. The minds gathered there are bound together by no bond, no sympathy, no inter-knowledge, no homogeneity. Each man, each class, each trade, each mind, stands apart from its neighbour ; and, instead of the " one mighty heart " lying asleep, as the poet depicted it, there are two millions of separate pulsations. London is a Babel in all but language.

The manufacturing districts, almost as considerable in the number congregated, are far more powerful from the sympathy which reigns throughout, and from the unity of intellect, aim, and feeling, that pervades them. Spread over a large tract, and composed of so many really different classes, this great unity is still not fully attained, and it is to attain it that the present progress is directed. What is that

stupendous invention, which sprung a few years since from the mind and necessities of the manufacturing districts,—those ways of communication which tend to bring a country into the compactness and narrowness of a city, places every object within a whisper's length of its fellow, and makes the country one province, one audience, one congregated people, to vote, think, or act?

And yet it is not by its numbers, its threats, or even by what was called demonstrations, that the industrial class here congregated exercise influence; it is rather by their ideas. All those which seize the public interests, and occupy the public mind, have germed in Manchester, or its kindred communities. Here is evidently the great impulsive power of England; here is seen the finger pointing forth which is the way of progress; not in any imperative or violent way, but simply by that right which gives active mind the power to dominate over and direct passive intellect. In the rest of Great Britain, class would willingly rest contented in submissiveness to class,—the middle to the upper, the lower to those which employ them, or afford them profit. Such philosophy,

however favourable to repose, is inimical to progress; but in Manchester—and by Manchester a wide region is typified—class is not contented to serve class, or to accept disadvantages, without examining and trying to overcome and remove them. Here, then, is the true movement, a movement that in all material things has made immense progress in our day.

In moral they remain stationary. Why? The leaders of the movement encounter, first of all, the jealousy and enmity of the wealthy even amongst the industrious classes, when they attempt other than material reform. Bright cannot thunder against the aristocracy without alarming the merchant and the mill-owner; whilst at the same time, no strong, bold, and general appeal could be made to the popular masses, because they are too ignorant to be trusted with power, and might make a dangerous use of it. What, then, is to be done? The first thing is to educate the people, and to bestow upon them unity of mind, feeling, and purpose, with the middle class.

This is the present task, to which the true spirits of Manchester have set themselves.

it there are giants in the path, obstacles and enemies of almost unconquerable inveteracy and power. First of all, the wealthy, even the industriously wealthy, dread any popular education, which goes beyond instilling the virtues of resignation and obedience. Then, the spirit of sect, which is opposed to education for another reason,—the fear of losing the numbers, and with the numbers the power, of their little associations.

The last is the most formidable obstacle, because it divides the middle class, and places it at the mercy either of the upper class, or of those in its exclusive interest. To overcome it is more and more difficult, owing to the circumstance that the historic and traditional assistance of middle against upper class in England for centuries has been carried on, and successfully carried on, by the same spirit of sect, and by means of the power and combination which in past time the fraternity of sect alone could give. Abuse sect as we will, England owes an immensity to it, if indeed she does not owe all. To break up this army, then, to dissolve those ranks, and to discard that banner under which the civic and industrious Commons of England fought so

long, is a grave matter. It is graver still, when the chiefs of the liberal movement ordain that the spirit of sect should give up its inveteracy and existence before these very old enemies which it so long combated, and which old enemies are no longer in exhaustion or decline, but reappearing with fresh youth and arrogance to redeem the past, not to cast it into oblivion. It is at a time when it is attempted to reinstate the Church of England in the authority of Laud, and to replace the Pope of Rome in the pretensions of Hildebrand,—it is at such a time that the Puritan and Presbyterian are to lay aside their fanaticism, and look upon their religious rivals with tolerance, and without either suspicion or fear.

This is evidently too much to ask, too much at least for the maintenance of the influence of the chiefs who ask it. But the principle is not the less indispensable to strive for and establish. For the ages in which it was wise and necessary to struggle for liberty of all kinds, civil and religious, through the organization of sects, have passed away. What is to be henceforth done, must be done by classes, not sects. For if the middle ranks

Englishmen remain divided in the latter, and restrained by their spirit and their political views and aims, farewell to progress, and farewell to their entire emancipation. Such truth will be fully seen in the great educational struggle that is commencing.

All this George Pevensey explained to Emily, and much did he improve her opinion of him by condescending to talk of such serious topics, as soon as he found that they interested and were comprehended by her. To comprehend them fully indeed she did not. She had much read recently the biography of modern politicians, and that public history in which Pitt and Fox, Burke and Sheridan, were the heroes. The writers of that biography and history were worshippers of genius and its reputation. The peculiar aim of each statesman, and his principles, was little the object of their consideration. Suffice it, that an actor stood forth for the liberties of the people, for the safety of Old England, or for any other vague and high-sounding aim. She loved Fox, though a more aimless and bootless life than his was never passed by a politician. She admired Pitt struggling against the course of events, and Burke fighting

upon them. The strong need of grace made up of oratorical talent and vaguelism, sufficed her. And had Delmer his way into a cabinet, a cabinet in with his generally liberal politics, the would have for her constituted him a She had not learned to appreciate or deeper aims of politicians, who look future, and who often in solitude and ob strike out the ideas which the people en and which shallow men adopt unconsc without appreciating their grandeur, or to inquire whence originated their dis She listened to Pevensey indeed with cu but by no means with admiration. She not, indeed, but admire the earnestness man, and the contrast of his character, respect, with those of either Jacobi or D But she doubted the sanity of anythi

views and good counsel amongst those rigid sectarians of her family with whom she came to pass much of her time at present. They saw nothing beyond their narrow circle. They were shocked at Naomi's breaking from them, & making any use of her noble fortune, save to make it over to some piece of money-making mechanism on two legs who belonged to the fraternity, and who, possessed of such fortune, would have instantly lost his calling, saving so much money that it were idle to strive for more, and yet being totally unprepared to make any use of money, save to make it fructify and accumulate. The great interest that Naomi took in politics they could not comprehend, although she had political influence to wield, as well as a heart and hand to bestow.

The idea that prevailed seemed to be the wisdom and necessity of cutting off all the higher parts of man's nature, as well as of his political and social state. Beyond the will of the family, or, at most, the pale of the municipality, they refused to look. Whilst imagining that their whole system was built on the Christian principle of fraternity, the fact was, that it was founded on the unchristian prin-

ciple of repulsion—a shunning and a dislike of classes above them for their vanities, of those below them for their turbulence and irregularity. She saw that it was as inconsistent and impolitic for a class to isolate itself, as for an individual; for all the evils of man's becoming monk are inherent in the equally unsocial act of a class—and especially of a middle class—becoming exclusive. She therefore parted with her rigid friends and relations on the best terms she could, and took refuge with others who had shaken off, like herself, the fetters of sect.

Mr. Larment, at whose mansion in the vicinity of Manchester Naomi became a guest was one of its most wealthy and prosperous manufacturers. He would certainly have been like hundreds of his wealthy compeers, what may be called a Manchester Tory, or Tory of the Peel school, but for an impediment which hindered him and them, and which must render Manchester Toryism for ever an inconsiderable party: this was their dislike to the Church, and to what the Church was always trusting to become—the High Church. This they could never stomach; and though with little that was ultra-liberal in their ideas, they

had one and all preferred plunging into the uttermost depth of political radicalism, to joining any party that made a *sine quâ non* of a hierarchy and sacerdotal pomp, and of a religion that was to be all aristocracy and domination, instead of being rational, social, and equal.

The Larments had, in fact, like the hundred other families we speak of, influential people in the region, but hovered on the borders of liberalism when two things made decided liberals of them—that is, the operation of the Corn Laws, and the introduction of Puseyism. The first was so plain a mulcting of one kind of property to support another; the second was so plain an attempt to subject one class to another, that the old industrial blood of the Larments revolted, as it would of the Worksworths had they survived. The greatest blunder that the disciples of Peel could have committed, was indeed to have taken up the Puseyite cause. The master had done everything calculated to place the party at the head of mercantile and industrial Toryism, when unfortunately the young men thought they would redeem their subserviency to liberal

ideas in political economy, by the adoption of illiberal ideas in the politico-religious and educational system. Instead of accomplishing what they aimed at—the reconciling of the higher classes of wealth and birth—they recovered no influence over the landed aristocracy, and lost their title to the respect as followers of the upper classes of commerce.

Here was the rock on which Gladstone split and Herbert toppled over. And herein Peel showed the defect of all the political leaders of the present day, who know not how to guide their party. The instinct and sense of Peel preserved the veteran himself from any such folly. But he had not instinct enough for himself and his party too; not sagacity and influence enough to hold them back by their garments from plunging into the quagmire after a mere will-o'-the-wisp. Gladstone would not have been pulled back. *He* looked upon Peel as a mere material and every-day politician, whilst he was to be the high-priest as well as Premier. He is now, however, extricating himself from the clouds of theocracy, and taking a clearer view of that nether world of public life in which there not

ng since seemed to remain scarcely a place
r him.*

A story is told, that the English Premier
s one Sunday afternoon returning on foot
m having attended service in Mr. Bennet's
nous chapel. In his walk he encountered
iel, the late lamented representative of her
jesty at the court of Tuscany. Speaking
gether on the natural topic of the day,
endance on divine service, the worthy
emier asked Shiel why he did not, were it
t for curiosity's sake, go and hear Mr.
nnet perform and preach? "No," said
iel, "when I do go to public devotion, I like
real thing, and go to mass at once. I
rays abhorred half-imitations."

It was perhaps on the same principle that
Larment, who had such a horror of Pusey-
t, had allowed the high priest of the "real
ng" to steal a march upon him. Larment
ll was a sumptuous mansion, on an emi-
nce, with no very distant view of that black
ud under which his geography told him lay
mchester. There were burnt red-tiles and
imneys in the vicinity too. But the predom-

* This was written before the Peelites gained office. Since
y have done so, they have made fair and laudable efforts to
rect their mistake.

minance of brick, and of all that it indicated was kept down by the interspersion of groves and even of some lofty trees, which, like aldermen, show that their species can flourish in despite of any density of atmosphere. Or day from amongst those trees there reared itself a tower, that certainly could serve no pictorial purpose. Beneath the tower were walls niched with smaller turrets, casement windows of pointed shape and feudal aspect. At length when people were wondering what could be, up sprung a spire and cross, with the sacred initials. The edifice had been put together in less than three months; and yet it was a convent. What the sturdy spirit of Catholicism, in its most juvenile and palmy days, would have required some signal event to originate,—which would have demanded years to plan, and meditate, and mature,—and which when the plan was matured, would ask many more years to find the resources to begin it with any prospect of continued advance,—this labour of centuries, but meeting the plaything of the 19th century, was planned and accomplished in a few weeks.

At this stage of the proceeding, that is

when the building was accomplished, its founders, or those who represented them, waited upon the wealthy owner of the neighbouring mansion, and claimed his patronage. The village and suburbs of the great manufacturing capital contained a number of Irish workmen. Mr. Larment himself employed a great number. And this big building was, it was presumed, to humanize them, to watch over their gentleness and respect for their employer, as well as over their orthodoxy and morality. There was not the least use in Mr. Larment's refusing the mere politeness which they asked, little use in his expressing fears that all these expensive and outward signs of religious sympathy for a certainly oppressed race, which looked not so much to worldly prosperity as to a restoration of religious ascendancy, would inevitably influence their pride, and prompt it to the natural overflow of all Irish passions—violence. Mr. Larment felt it wise or necessary to smother his fears, and even so far conceal his disgust, that whilst he turned indignantly a Puseyite parson from his door, the Prior of St. Martin, or the superior of the new church, contrived to gain admittance to the hall.

The last commodity, intellectual or material, that Naomi would have come to Manchester to look for was theology, and to her amazement she found nothing else. Every other topic was overruled by it; every other object of interest was so intermingled with it, that the religion of the question was the uppermost. Amongst the members of her own old family sect, she was not surprised to hear scripture thought and language used on the commonest and most vulgar affairs of life. But at Larment Hall she hoped to re-emerge upon the secular world. Quite the contrary; religious strife was at the time far more vivacious and keen in polite and worldly than in puritan circles, and the dispute between high and low Church banished every other theme.

The mind can rarely have more than two beats, the one of serious occupation, the other of a lighter and more amusing kind. Hence the healthful alternation of business and pleasure. But here, as in too many layers of English life, incessant turmoil forms the business, and polemics the amusement. The latter was far the more laborious of the two. But it was exciting, and what excites amuses. Neither

the mind, nor the temper, nor the judgment, however, are improved by society's adopting religious disquisition for an amusement; for the amusement ends by becoming a corroding passion, and religion is too often converted into a mass of puerility and sophistry.

The effect of this was to make Naomi desire to escape altogether into some higher region of society, whose serious occupations were ennobling, and whose amusements were intellectual and refined, leaving religion as well as industry in their proper places, without allowing the mind to be fanaticized by the one, or materialized by the other. But even at Larment Hall, far above the smoke of Manchester, she durst not boast her admiration of that gentlemanly school of politics, called Whiggism. In Manchester the thing was ignored, or if Whiggism commanded any respect, it was not the aristocratic Whiggism of England, but the mercantile Whiggism, to whom the words *liberal Conservative* answered far better than the Anglicè Whig.

Naomi, therefore, could not find in the Larments any sympathy for her predilections, political or personal for Charles Delmer. Your monied man dislikes a poor politician, or

so much genius, who is so preposterously ambitious with poverty, and to be tical pretension on no solid property. the Larments had heard that Mr. was a suitor for Miss Worksworth's and this filled them with great respect and hope for her. Seeing, however, that there were no reasons for this, save very vulgar common ones, it made no impression ever upon her, and caused her rather despair of getting anything like good counsel in this great centre of wisdom.

Mr. Poyntz paid his respects at 10 St. James's Hall, to the great satisfaction of the Duke of Devonshire, who, with the true weakness of Marlborough, loved a lord. Bishop Stromboli had just denounced and counteracted what he called the Low Church system of education, got u

upon a soft morass. As his speechifying was private, the public had not the opportunity of questioning his logic, or discussing his arguments. But these were easily arrived at by supposition, and not sparingly sifted.

"After all," said the Prior of St. Mark's, "there are but two modes of keeping society in order, and in a due respect for moral and religious duties. One is, that society be organized as congregations, communities, or sects, of which the members keep watch on each other, are accountable for each other, excite, reprove, sustain, reward, and influence each other. That is your Puritan English organization, most effective wherever it can be carried out. This system, however, requires a degree of equality between all classes, and a degree of education, seldom or never realized. It was perfect in New England, but how it was even possible in Old England is not easy to see. Then there is the other mode, which is, that the members of society, or the inhabitants of a country, not being able to control, watch, and lead each other, a person in authority is appointed, with all the power, enlightenment, education, and disinterestedness, which they want, to do it for them. If persons in such

authority be first appointed by God, the authority is more complete, and the more complete the better. The one is the Puritan, or Republican mode of moral and religious government. The latter is the Roman Catholic method of moral and religious government. I must declare," said the Prior, "that I know of no medium between the two, worthy of moment's consideration, or at all entitled to be considered a scheme or a system of moral and religious government."

"Bishop Stromboli," said Pevensey, "would quite agree with the Prior, were he here; for he too sees no medium. He fully joins in the anathema passed by the Prior upon the Anglican Church as established, and declares, that without more authority, apart from the State and above the State, it cannot fulfil the functions of a Church. Although, as somewhat of a Puritan, flattered by what the Bishop has said of our popular organization, I beg to say that I perfectly agree with the American in considering religion as not a thing of this world, and as a law that has nothing to do with political rule, or social condition. It could and should be able to save souls in any condition or organization of society, instead

of taking the legislator's place, and preparing any particular organization to suit it. There may have been a time when rigour and coercion, and authority able to wield both, was required to keep men in order and good conduct. And then puritan, or episcopal rigour and authority, may have been necessary. But the world has out-grown one and the other. An Englishman is too bold to be governed by fear, too inquisitive to be guided by authority. He will never put himself again in leading-strings. The mass of men will never bow before confessionals, with the great confessional of Heaven open to them. And right education will enable them to break the close spirit of sect, and enable them to be moral without being watched, honest without coercion, and religious without having their imaginations fascinated. All your modern schemes consider man as an ignorant child, whilst his knowledge and maturity are daily growing."

"Growing," said the Prior, "to a height of pride, that will dispense with all religion."

"By no means. The more you educate, the more you intellectualize man, and give him command over himself and his passions, the more he must feel the necessity, and the

impulse to provide himself as well for the next world as for this, and to light the lamp of religion within him."

"You suppose man to be a rational being," said the Prior.

"He may be made such."

"And a being endowed with leisure, instead of one condemned to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow."

"In the East, when that decree was passed, man's labour has never been other than slight, and has never interfered with his intellectual development. It is, on the contrary, the little value of, and necessity for labour there, that has allowed him to be tyrannized over, and enabled his being debruted."

"And Manchester."

"We will mend Manchester."

"I may," said the Prior, "but I defy *you* even to get at it."

Miss Worksworth believed in Pevensey, but gave a handsome subscription to the Prior. As a great proof and ensample of the order which he would produce amidst the turbulence of the working class, he chose the opportunity of Miss Worksworth's presence, and still more of Bishop Stromboli's, to get up a procession,

in which he was to display all the newly-gotten wealth of the Priory, as well as the members of his flock. Mr. Larment tried to dissuade him, and bade him recollect that expressions of triumph and exultation would beget rivalry, and awaken antagonism, which as yet was dormant, and might safely and wisely be left so.

The Prior would not heed the advice, but collected the next day his gorgeous army in array. It was a festival, and warranted by its solemnity the celebration proposed. And forth the procession marched in all the pomp of cross and banner, embroidery and gilding. The emblems were rich, harmless, and devout, and the whole display was no doubt well meant by the Prior. But those who followed and made up the procession, had come from a land, where man is ever at war with his fellow-man ; where to revile and to taunt forms the occupation of life ; and where religion, after appealing in centuries past to the right of the strongest, got conquered and crushed, and yet continues to appeal to the same divinity of force, where a moral force and greater divinity, that of right, would be more effectual in procuring redress. The consequence of such gibes and taunts,

fish, who were concerned with lower, brought the labour market down. Tri beggary was in this case more odi triumphant crosses. But one was co with the other; and an onslaught w first of Saxon upon Celt, and then c upon Catholic, that soon scattered th procession in disarray, and brought of violence upon the gingerbread ch was with difficulty saved from destr Mr. Larment, and a body of the best workpeople; and the Prior received t lesson of leaving Saxon and Celt without any fresh or flagrant cause of between them.



HARLES DELMER.

A STORY OF THE DAY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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CHARLES DELMER.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT is it, that man can be got to pay for? Is it rank? Is it mere pleasure, sensual or intellectual? Is it power, or the many gratifications of vanity or pride? No! it is none of these things. The man will pay most for is excitement—the excitement, that occupies the brain, and sends blood flying through veins and arteries, that racing with it all the time; every energy strained, every physical craving excited or silenced,—years passing as if they were days, and life itself burning with a bright and quick-consuming flame. Excitement, like other great elixirs, can never be overdone. It would volatilize and disappear.

in such a state, and it must therefore be mingled with some other substance or some occupation, that conveys but disguises it. Thus men take excitement in a great variety of doses. And the most favourite medicine, perhaps in which it can be conveyed, is that of trading or, as it is called, speculating with a view to wealth and profit. Indeed, money-making comes nearer to the state of pure excitement than any other simple, provided the spirit of the man be such as to be fascinated by the material love of money. But when there is excitement independent of the profit, the elixir is stronger still. Amongst the strongest admixtures of the kind, may be reckoned the keeping of a racing establishment, the becoming the *impresario* of theatre, or the proprietor of a newspaper. All three being positions that afford great excitement and certain loss, are, nevertheless most largely sought after by different classes of men of wealth, who, ravenous after the excitement, persuade themselves that they have a particular talent in store, to enable them to make profitable what infallibly occasions ruin to every one else. Your graves and your coolest men will thrust their gravity

into this mistake. Never was theatre so fallen, that a capitalist may not be found to put his thousands under it; never journal so bankrupt, as that political dervishes may not be found ready to bleed for it. When one lord is ruined and sells his racing stud, there is always another to purchase it.

There is no possibility of accounting, even by this theory of excitement, for the phenomena of people who are daily and yearly to be seen making such fearful sacrifices of time, peace, money, and respectability itself, to the delights of spending the better half of the year jammed upon the benches of the House of Commons,—breathing the worst atmosphere, and listening to the dullest essays, but still enacting the part of one of those six hundred flies which are privileged to stick upon the wheels of the great state-coach. Talk as you will of political jobbery, there is not so much gained by it after all. And if the blanks be placed in juxtaposition with the prizes, the latter would be found so few and insignificant, that politics would be pronounced the most unpromising lottery that ever duped the ambitious and the greedy. Actual profit, however, is not necessary, but that chance of profit, which allows

parliamentary candidate from the rep
being an idiot for his pains.

It seems, at first sight, degrading,
seats in the legislature of the countr
be sought for on no higher groun
those which render an entrance into
desirable,—the having a place to sp
evening. But, after all, there might
members of Parliament than the *d*
The necessitous might prove bad,
the idle are but harmless and unp
The *vis inertiae* that pervades the
the idle, gives a steady somnolence
House of Commons, which defends
spectability against the inroads of t
curial, the discontented, the necessit
the flighty.

If such idle and picktooth motive
men to become the representatives

would be the constituencies that chose their candidates, not the candidates that picked and chose the constituencies. In nine cases out of ten, the constituency has neither will nor choice in the matter. The electoral body of every great city in England resembles, very often, a bed of oysters, contented to take and to gulp the water which the tide sends them, whether it be dirty or clean. The constituencies never decide whom they shall have : that is in general decided for them ; and most probably in a back parlour, not holding half-a-dozen gentlemen.

The member-making power is generally found, at the great time of incubation, to become settled in two shops, to either of which those who have not a high-road or a by-road to Parliament ensured to them, must apply. There their merits are weighed, their wealth and talents, usefulness and influence, considered ; and each is expected to contribute a portion of what he abounds in, receiving in turn a portion of that which he lacks. The man of mere wealth, obscurity, and of no ideas, may here purchase a respectable character as a staunch politician. The needy adventurer may here get money to pay his coach-hire

down to his constituents, selling in exchange the aid of his insolence or the favour of abstinence, as it may be. Men whose position, liberal or conservative, may have been damaged by trimming, are here whole, as domestics out of place are whole, by a fictitious character, obtained handsome consideration. Here men areajoled into spending fortunes to sustain the interest of their party,—their party ignoring the debt, and refusing the place if still in their gift, to the dupe who sacrifices his all in the expectation of it. Dantescribed over his *Inferno* merely the invitation, for all who entered to abandon hope. Now hope is the only thing that electional hells condescend to leave a man. They take care to rob him of everything.

Some of those happy and flexible men have penetrated into both dens, where they negotiated with the Tories, and finally accepted service with the Radicals—and are not few of such men—declare the Tories the worst, that is, the most reckless, the most deceitful, the most given to jockeying, the most sharp practice. They have to deal with older and younger dupes than their demagogues.

rivals. And the candour with which they trick a young heir to commence the use of his patrimony by a contested election, or assure an East India Director of rank and place, contingent on a change of ministry, if he will but bleed,—this trickery is carried to far greater perfection in Carlton coteries than in Reform ones. Singular to say, this combination of electoral and pecuniary dupery is not the work of the wily solicitor or the keen professional man of business. You will see what is to all appearance a bluff country gentleman with a red face, fall to the work and go through with it with all the *gusto* and skill of an experienced practitioner.

Major Broadlands, the Tory manager, was consulted about Shuttlefield. He replied that Shuttlefield was a fancy place, with all manner of whims and fancies afloat in it. Canvassing it was like fishing for salmon: you might throw out anything in the shape of a fly, the most gaudy, the most moonshiny, the most unlife-like and unrealizable thing that could be fastened upon a hook;—there was no knowing what the Shuttlefielders might or might not bite at. But their numbers passed the power of money, as their understandings

did the limits of reason. His grace of mington was the best judge. But Shuttle was sure to return some odd fishes, who, if called Radicals, were sure to aid the Tories more effectually and usefully than if they avowed Tories.

The Liberal den—to which would-be members of Parliament, for money or with it, coined at that mint into votes—was under the conduct of professional men. We are delicate and grandiose: there are certain things necessary to their very existence as a party, of which they seem to take no cognizance, lest contact should defile or imply them. That such things are, they well know that they could not exist without their maintenance, and patronage they know full well also; yet they profess to be quite above such sub-gentle and sub-noble considerations. For two men of business, therefore, manage the great Liberal electoral concerns, to the credit of their ability, no doubt, but without the high discernment or generosity. Under the old system each aristocrat had his borough or boroughs, and he took pains to look amongst the noble and the intellectual, the early distinguished of the land, to make

choice that would do him credit and the country good. No such discerning eye is now employed in such researches. No one looks out for rising talent, neither the aristocracy nor the popular constituencies which have replaced it; these are far more indifferent than the quondam patron, and are quite as often gulled into choosing an incapable or designing man as the great noble was deceived in his nomination.

This duty, which the aristocracy have been deprived of, individually at least, and which the constituencies which succeeded to their power either shirk or know not how to perform,—this duty of choice, one should think, might have been exercised and fulfilled, at least to some extent, by the directing committees to which the great parties entrusted their power and their influence, and in which were concentrated the activity and the direction. But the functions which properly belong to the leaders of party—to its best influenced, best placed, and most intelligent members—cannot be filled by the hard-working officials, or hangers-on, that form the tail of the said party. These did enough, they thought, if they pushed to the utmost those already found

in the very front rank, and if everything was done to defeat those who were prominent of their antagonists.

Besides, these bodies entrusted with the electoral agencies of parties, have no longer in common those abundant resources, that inexhaustible supply of ready cash, of which the political zeal and the ample property of past times facilitated the collection. It is at least a party truism, and no doubt a fact in all concerns, that an English magnate thought as much of 50% towards the middle of the present century, as he did of 500% when only the quarter of the century had elapsed. How is this? Is it from avarice, indifference to politics? Impossible to accuse the aristocracy of either. To the abrogation of the corn laws! The poverty of spirit came long before the great fiscal laws were repealed. It must be the progress of events, of economical events, then, which disinflated the power of the aristocracy. So that the lessening of the expense of elections by the great measure of Reform was in reality a boon, not a privation. The upper classes have nearly as much influence as ever, and at a less cost. The fact is, they must now pay in promises and illusions what

before was paid in coin. Gammon, with them, has succeeded Mammon; and the art of bribery has been exorcised and driven out of the field merely to give way to the art of lying. The good public are amazed at the marvellous inconsistencies of the present day,—the thundering apostasies, the marvellous divorce that has taken place between words and acts. But it is all necessity, and proceeds from the total separation and difference that exists between the ideas of the ruling and of the ruled class. The electors have one set of ideas,—those entitled to be elected have another: were there full and complete understanding and explanation between them, there are not ten constituencies in England that would return the members they do. The day will come when this will happen, when the eyes of the people will open, and when their every opening will be a revolution; but for the present it is the received custom for the electoral body to be contented with a kind of sham language addressed to them, which they do not half comprehend, and which in truth they do not take the trouble to comprehend. This language is the coin that returns men to parliament and place; and the best wielder of

ambiguities is the richest in the art of the multitude. There are men so talented in this novel resource, that address a popular audience for hours and win every one of their sweet words; no rational man can descry aim, or meaning from the mass of words, and artistically fused together. People of measures and men, but in truth made of much greater importance than

The professional gentlemen who managers of elections under the old knew the value of crown-pieces and better than that of words, and found profit in the use of such instruments therefore deeply lamented the modern of dealing so largely in moonshine.

“ Making bricks without straw was play to making members of parliament guineas.”

“ Fortunately,” said one of his class “ there are bricks who furnish the straw—and in fact, the only bricks of the name.”

The first was a spectacled and person, so full of business that it shined from his eyes in the shape of most of

looks, from his pockets in the guise of papers, and from his demeanour what was intended to be diplomacy of the first water.

He was himself, he said, above pecuniary considerations in such a matter, or interested ones of any kind. He was for the party and the cause; and he pronounced both words as Hampden might have done on the field, or Sydney on the scaffold.

"We must conform to the times, Finot," said the other, who was the official manager of the small business of his party; a man of great solemnity and great gentleness, with an Herculean form and a Lilliputian voice, with which he observed, "if we have less money than of old, we have less need of it."

"Those who have money," said Finot, "go to the other side. Your enriched nabob, or wealthy colonist, hies to the Tories instantly."

"Where are they,—your nabobs or your John Colonists, who used to come home with purses well lined, to exchange their guineas for rank and position? You are thinking of past times. The colonies send us nothing now, save hungry Radicals and semi-rebels, eager for place, and taking popularity as the cheap road to it. Here is what the colonies send

us," exclaimed Somnole, flinging a letter the table.

"Ay, letters from respectable Radical do all they can to hurt us five months session, and then claim our friendship a for having spared us on some particular sion. In session they are always w places and favours; and at their electio are to pay their expenses, under the pk they serve to keep out a Tory."

"Our most inveterate Radicals are ce the colonial specimens," said Finot.

"And the hungriest," said Somnole.

"Unfortunately, they are the cleverest. And but for them and the Irish, who k a row now and then, you must own purely English parliament would be a dull affair."

"And your Irish are odd customers. did you pick up that staunch supporter Liberal government, who sits for the of God-speed?"

"A most valuable county member, Finot, "who was never yet absent f division, even when he could not stand counted."

"He writes that he must have the Po

appointments in his gift, as well as the Revenue places, else he will never be able to beat the Repealers."

"You cannot have a better distributor of patronage, surely, than a staunch county member."

"Yes, but the rogue sells the places, and lives on the proceeds; which is not respectable."

"Then take the Popish champion, and see what he will cost you."

"Oh, no—he would demand as much for a little temporary complaisance, as the present respectable member for his body and soul. The honourable member for the Barony of God-speed shall have the increase of patronage he requires."

"But how does the honourable member for God-speed manage to get himself returned?"

"You hear his statement of ways and means. And then he represents the property of the county."

"And where is that?"

"*In nubibus*, where he goes to look for it; for the squires are all bankrupt, and the peasantry all paupers. The latter have no principles; the former would sell them for an old

How are the Peellites to be treated?

“With the greatest civility. They are allies on the question of the day; and that question perishes they perish with butterflies with the warmth of June. farmers will never forgive them, so they can never represent the landed interest commercial interests must come to a party, and that the Peelites can never be

“Sagacious constituencies will not be however, to the merits of accomplished and experienced statesmen.”

“As if a constituency was ever sagacious. It has, in fact, become useless for Ministers to look out for and patronize political talent; for of what use is it, if constituencies will not have it? And the true constituencies do prefer blockheads to blockheads witness the Modern Athens.”

"No," said Somnole.

"His constituency is just the little one that would be pleased and contented to find the object of their choice advanced to a post of confidence. They will discard a man that brings them neither honour nor profit."

"When men without family or fortune will have pretensions they must expect disappointments. Besides, the day for your rising talent is passed; genius is a drug. The aristocracy will not advance them, now that they have no longer a tie upon them. The constituencies prefer infinitely small fellows of their own kidney. If Burke were to come again, what lord would make him his secretary; and what Bristol would elect him? If Sheridan were to come again, he might crack jokes and bottles, but not at Bellamy's. Sibthorpe is quite enough to amuse a reformed House of Commons. Jokes that are not in Joe Miller, and eloquence not of the approved and unadorned fashion, are not wanting."

"And Jacobi, who has fought his way in despite of two armies of aristocrats, and three of officials?"

"And where could Jacobi have found a patron? How he found a constituency is still

a marvel. If a man have the talent of the devil, like Jacobi, of course he must force his way; but every talent less diabolical, or more useful, would at the present day be stifled in the crowd through which it attempted to struggle in vain. We have no business looking for Jacobis; such fellows take care of themselves; not like Delmer, who wants a hand at every step, and who would scorn to trip up a friend, or assassinate a foe."

"Well, I should think Delmer a most useful man."

"He wants suppliance and servility; and without either these or impudence a man never gets on."

"Are you sure of that? Delmer stands in the southern division of ——, and he is sure to be returned: he has got the local interest."

"It will be very indecorous, if one who the Whig chiefs have not thought worthy of place, should come to reproach them with the omission, or ask them to repair it, from the high ground of a county representative."

"There is no help for it, I am told; for woman wills it."

CHAPTER II.

NAOMI WORKSWORTH, like all her sex, must have heartily abhorred and been disgusted with the question that occupied the English mind and English society at this time. It was so purely material; so very, so almost arithmetically logical, so complete an antidote to anything like sentiment or enthusiasm, that it almost thrust women out of the daily intercourse of argument and ideas, as churlishly as a modern club-house.

It was very unfortunate for Naomi, who made great efforts to take an interest, and have convictions, in politics, that her young sensibilities should have met, on the very threshold, this dry question of the price of bread. It moreover divided precisely those classes, one of which her family had emerged from, and the other into which her father, by the

peculiar investments of his fortune, had introduced her. New to both, that is, not tied up in the inveterate ideas of either, she had not acquired that hereditary insolence which the squire is made to imbibe with his earliest food against the townsman and the tradesman; nor had she been inoculated with that defiant hatred to the squirearchy and the Church that smoulders in the civic and the dissenting mind of England. One of the most carefully bestowed and willingly swallowed lessons of childhood, is that which teaches it what to hate. And it is surprising how much education, domestic and scholastic, is made to consist of hates. We have seen, in our day, an association for attaining the great object of peace between the rival nations of the world: should not an association be established for bringing about peace between the rival classes and conflicting interests, which vituperate and injure each other in every country-house, where even Christianity is made the vehicle of mutual hatred and social prescription?

Amidst the few aristocratic circles in which it had as yet been her fate to mingle, Naomi had not perceived that contempt of the *roture*, which is as vivid, nevertheless, as it was three

hundred years ago. But in Manchester, her acquaintance, less given to dissemble or be courteous, had not concealed the hatred borne by them to those who prided themselves on birth, and who lived upon the soil. In any other position, or if of the other sex, Naomi would, no doubt, have experienced those slights and mortifications which beget this feeling. For hereditary rank and wealth in England, whilst the class has been losing the privileges and influence of the one, and the reality of the other, has nevertheless kept much of the superciliousness that generates hate, that produces and exacerbates civil war.

Miss Worksworth was pressed at Manchester to give the support of her electoral influence to a candidate, not only inclined to support commercial interests, but partaking of them and representing them. When she asked whom, her advisers could not point out any one of character and eminence that might pretend to that candidature. No one more Radical or anti-gentle than Charles Delmer would have a chance for the electoral division; and even Delmer could only be made secure by a tacit compromise, accepting a Tory for his colleague. Delmer was put forward, she

declared, by the house of Mertons; and the Earl was the politician whom Naomi decided to respect and trust the most.

Mr. Poyntz was to stand, it was understood on the Tory interest; but it was also understood that he was but a lukewarm Protectionist, anxious for excuses to accept the accomplished fact of Free Trade; and with such liberal leanings and ideas of farming as even landlord politics, as gave great hopes of his proving a valuable supporter of liberal progress, as soon as circumstances admitted of his being so. All this was declared by many of the friends of Naomi to be rank treason on her part, and but downright renegadism and ratting. She offered as a compromise, to employ all her influence to get George Pevensey returned for Shuttlefield. This was something, but not enough. Besides Pevensey had little chance against Chartism on one side, and the old Tories on the other with but a weak support from the masters who rather disliked his singularity and independence.

After Miss Worksworth had made the decision, she was much chagrined to find that the accusations against her in consequence were

but too just; and that after many conversations, researches, and inquiries after who was good and what was right, with an eager determination to do both when she found them, the upshot was her supporting candidates of three different parties; and thus, as far as the prevalence of parties went, nullifying her own preference and her own influence. And yet she had done the best; had acted from disinterested reasons. She was merely driven by circumstances, since unable to command them; and making the best of them, whilst totally unable to master or do what she would with them. Her family friends, however, failed not to say, that she had acted merely to propitiate the two great sections of the aristocracy, Whig and Tory, in order to be received as a denizen into both their circles.

Charles Delmer sat despondent in his home, meditating how best and decorously he could retire from a struggle with the ungrateful world. He turned over in his hand an ambiguous letter from his old constituents, saying how glad they would be to return him again, but that another candidate was in the field; one who not only promised future patronage

and protection to the few electors of the little borough, but also had set about permanent expenditure, and exercised all the active influence of wealth. Charles was pondering in what vein to answer—whether of light-hearted defiance, courteous deprecation, or indignant virtue,—when a letter came, signifying that through the influence of the Earl —, he was to be proposed for the southern division of —; and it was desired that he should set about his canvas without loss of time.

Charles, in truth, little dreamed that the hint of his friend Jacobi to the heiress would ever have been acted upon. He had himself shrunk from what, perhaps, prudence and courtesy demanded. His case was taken up, the personal neglect shown him by the chiefs of the party avenged. It was a new instalment of hope, a new lease of existence. And with the elastic nature of a mind of talent, he set about his new task, determined to reconquer lost ground, and, at all events, to prove that the patronage and friendship with which he was honoured, did not fall upon an inert or ungrateful person. Nor is it a trifle to appear amongst various assemblages of busy and serious men, and pretend to

the duty of representing them. Charles's, however, was a spirit that rose to the level of such an enterprise. The time for argument and eloquence was past, for the great cause was won. What remained was to encourage the conquerors, and satisfy without exciting them to frenzy, and, at the same time, to conciliate and reconcile the conquered to their defeat. Good-humour, and address, and the tact of the gentleman were of more use here than either the most conclusive logic, or the most irrefragable political economy. And Charles, notwithstanding his want of acres and paucity of equipage, was soon almost as much a favourite with the squires as Mr. Poyntz himself; and, despite of Mr. O'Dowd, was looked to even by the unwashed.

There was one personage deeply mortified by all these compromises and arrangements, and who exclaimed more vehemently than any present against the inconsistent principles and backsliding gait of the age. It was the first time that a stranger had been thrust upon the county by the manufacturing interest, which, however he was indebted to pecuniarily, his Grace had hitherto found sufficiently unproductive to him politically. The arrangement

which secured the election of his grandson was far from satisfying him ; and the young gentleman, secure from opposition by reason of the tie with the Delmer party, thought it inconvenient and uncivil then to appeal to the zeal of the former, awaken their enthusiasm, or summon them to the charge, under his guidance, with the despair of a forlorn hope, for the recovery or maintenance of protection. Mr. Poyntz merely persuaded the agriculturists, that whilst they supported the natural chiefs of the land, no opportunity would be lost for maintaining or recovering those advantages, without which the plough could not longer be driven, nor land be profitably tilled, in England. The Duke of Arming-ton, nailed to his easy chair, felt that the tide had passed, and left him high and dry upon his old ideas. The aim of all who spoke to him was to quiet and cajole him. He began to suspect that Mr. Poyntz was no better than his father, and that Toryism itself had ceased be a power, and was preserved but as a convenient flag and a respectable delusion.

If, however, the county and its interests, and its direction, had escaped from the trembling hands of the Duke of Arming-ton, he

still held in them, not indeed the sceptre that could rule and influence the town, but a great many of the threads that could move and agitate it. Mr. Omichund was his contemporary and his servant; the farmers were at his order, and ready as ever they were in old times to wait at the buttery-hatch, with all the Tory faction at his command. His Grace was determined not to allow so turbulent a fellow as Pevensey to sit for the borough that had grown on his ducal estate. He could at least keep Manchester out of Shuttlefield, if he could not exclude it from the county. The Duke therefore allowed to a connexion of the family, Mr. Dexter, to be proposed as candidate for Shuttlefield. To Mr. Dexter his Grace allowed the full liberty, which he denied or censured in his grandson,—the liberty, the power, and the meanness, to go any length in the way of ambiguous declaration—to ally with the Chartists, if he pleased; to fraternize with the Communists, if he found it answer. Mr. Dexter was one of those who expound history after the manner of Lord Mahon, and who maintain that the modern Tories are the ancient Whigs, and the modern Whigs no better than the superannuated

Tories. He maintained, therefore, that he was doing the liberal thing, when he upheld the rights of aristocracy and Church. Mr. Dexter's great support in Shuttlefield was derived, however, not so much from those who admired or who shared his principles, or, indeed, who had any principles, except the important one—that the most desirable and profitable of all political events was a contested election. Foremost in this rank of disinterested politicians were all the publicans, and all the hangers-on of publicans, all the idle, all the corrupt, all who had a capacity for agitation, for houcussing, for bribery, and for beer. The pauperism of the town was all for Mr. Dexter; so was the wealth; for even your moderate Liberal preferred him to Pevensey, who came forward with all the rigidity and supposed forbiddingness of dissent. The farm-power was all for Dexter; and the Chartists, though they hated the Tories and the Tory candidate, preferred the latter to Pevensey, who was in the habit of denouncing their physical force schemes, and who, as an employer of operatives, was far from being the humble servant of their exigencies or caprices.

Pevensey, however, had all the middle, the

shop-keeping population, of small capital and petty industry, with him—people just emerged from the ranks of the working-class, and beginning to feel the independence of being at nobody's beck. This class had got a little more time to read, a little more to think ; and, certainly, some of them drew very strange conclusions, and concocted some very odd ideas. But all were Liberals ; some hated the old régime of England, and were anxious for the Ballot to set them free from the last chain of their political and social servitude.

But the most essential aid to Pevensey, if not in numbers, at least in nerve and force, came from the *locos*, on whom he had by no means counted, and whose turbulence he had so often resisted. Pevensey, indeed, was by no means the Robin Hood they would have selected to represent them. They disliked his Puritanism, his magisterial ways, his love of economy rather than adventure. But he was not the mountebank of the mob, like O'Dowd, nor that of the great lord, like Dexter. The partizanship of the *locos* flung the jealousy of too many of the *old hands* into the scale of Dexter ; and even Mr. O'Dowd, who spoke openly of neutrality, favoured underhand his

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land, regard it as a poor man's, but a
ist's question.

Miss Worksworth had thought it

interval, of course. Amongst the guests were a sprinkling of foreigners—Poles, French, and others—anxious, they alleged, to witness the novelty, and analyse the peculiarities, of an English election. In the midst of a very grave discussion occasioned by the foreigners demanding information, and the Earl's anxiety to communicate it, Charles, who had been reading the paper, burst into an unextinguishable fit of laughter. This was too bad not to make every one inquire the cause; and Charles instantly confessed it to be a speech of Jacobin's, so full of sublimities that could not be fathomed, of pictures of distress with all the pathos of truth in them, and schemes for remedying them as inscrutable and impenetrable as a mist.

"That's the man of the day," said Charles, after reading a wonderful sentence; "that's the master of modern language, with humbug specious enough for the crowd, and transparent enough for the sensible."

"Yet, you see," said the Earl, "he is not a popular personage with either the sensible or the crowd."

"Who is popular now-a-day? Peel was not, certainly; yet he had the highest

character as a public man. Lord John is not more popular than Peel; both have all that their day requires or affords—confidence and respect.”

“And Jacobi?”

“His great rivals have taken a score, or a score and a-half of years’ public life to acquire the respect and confidence I speak of. Give him time.”

“Do any of ye believe in anything?” asked Miss Worksworth.

“We believe that the world moves round.”

“And onward a little, I hope,” said the Earl.

“Now Jacobi would tell you that even when the world moves on, it is an orbit that turns upon itself.”

“You do not think with Manchester, then,” said Miss Worksworth, “which imagines that the town interest under its lead is about to deal a fatal blow to the landed, and is likely to pass before it.”

“The small amount of annual revenue the landed interest loses by their defeat will make them stronger by the dispersion of their enemies, who, in their victory, must divide. I have been struck by nothing so much in my

as the superstitious respect paid to the old proprietor, and the kind of religious which the people of England feel for literary wisdom. People talk of civic interests easily combining, and the rustic population being impossible to get together. I do not know what it might be for an *émeute*; but unanimity of feeling and compactness of organisation, the agricultural interest beats every other. They think, bargain, and clap hands, as one man."

But surely," observed one of the foreigners, "the great decrease in the number of the agricultural class must alone diminish the importance of the interest, even when a loss of revenue does not much affect them."

However the actual delver and plougher may be diminished in proportion to the spinner or the handicraftsman, the dependent classes, who worship wealth—and that great source of independent wealth, land—maintain as great a clerical ascendancy as ever. The number of domestic servants in England are equal to the number of agricultural labourers; but the peasant is as great a worshipper of hereditary rank and wisdom as the other. The question

of rent, and a few others, being once settled, mercantile wealth and capital will attach itself to, and mingle itself with, landed wealth and capital, as better organized, more solid and able to keep down the pretensions of the employed, more versed in the traditional arts of government, more endorsed with the respect of the commonalty : in fact, the land, despite of Anti-corn Law and Reform, will long govern England."

"No doubt," said the foreigner, "as long as political power is attached to landed property."

"It must ever be attached to it ; universal suffrage itself would but increase it."

"If property be political power, the laws regulating the transmission of property regulate the transmission of power. Suppose you change these laws."

"As in France ?"

"As in France."

"You would no doubt obtain the same results ; but as these results are becoming daily more apparent, they will, I fancy, act as insurmountable obstructions to any change respecting the transmission of property in England. Ye Frenchmen, with your example,

hurried England on in 1830, and helped us to a Reform Bill. I much mistake if you are not going the way now to help us back, or, at least, make our car of progress stick."

"Well, I hope Mr. Poyntz may start upon so happy a theme," said the Earl.

"I was dying," said Charles, "to whisper as much to some of the squires, whom I found despairing for fear of the progress of democracy. But your landed gentry, who are Whiggish enough in the north to listen to such arguments as these, are, in the neighbourhood of the manufacturing hives, terror-stricken and timidly Tory, as a king of the forest, who feels in danger of being devoured by dogs."

"We are all, then, fighting for nothing," said Miss Worksworth. "Trade has been a mere dream to hope, land a mere delusion to lose. I should prefer being carried back to the time of cavalier and roundhead, when zeal was kindled and heavy blows dealt at least for something."

"What did it all end in?" asked Charles.

"In the winning of constitutional liberty," observed the Earl; "the noblest political monument of the human race. Don't *persister* it any longer, Delmer; you'll make Miss

Worksworth look upon you as she does in Jacobi, as a political Atheist."

"I am not stating what I would wish to see," said Charles, "but depicting things as they are; especially for the benefit of our continental friends here, who come over periodically to see us falling into the gulf of schism, whilst they never catch us in any more exact act than in climbing up the sides, and running away from the chasm."

"It cannot be satisfactory," said Worksworth, "to be always pulling the rope in one direction, yet be conscious that you are making no way."

"Well; yet if the process of English politics will have me a county member, I must incline to the ideas natural to such a position."

"I always thought," said Naomi, "that one of the requisites of human happiness was to be serious, at least, in all one did."

"And they no doubt are happiest who are serious in all they do, like the Duke of Argyll, or George Pevensey: they are serious and never have occasion to turn back in disgust or in lightness at the question they advance, or the men they deal with. I am twenty-three hours out of the twenty-four

and think sincerely from the bottom of my soul. But there will come, now and then, an hour when life seems but a dream, philosophy a cheat, politics a humbug, and something to laugh at, but never to be angry with."

"I grieve," said the Earl, "to see Charles Delmer thus regard his own cause and the cause of his party with doubt and with a bitter mockery. It shows that recent disappointments have sunk deep into his spirit."

"He seems," said Naomi, "to have caught some of the Mephistophelism of Mr. Jacobi, without the mirth and buoyancy that makes light of it."

"He wants the iron health of Jacobi, and has evidently received a wound somewhere. Delmer is still in a state of sentiment, and of sentiment embittered, whilst Jacobi has left all such juvenile thoughts and things long behind."

"What can embitter a young man embarked in a fair career? He has too true a spirit to be struck down by one political disappointment."

"A poor man and a proud spirit has terrible struggles in every walk of life," said the Earl, "and the worst struggle of all, when he

chooses the highest walk, as Charles done."

"His friends seem to have behaved badly to him."

"You mean the Premier. But the distribution of office is such a compromise among a thousand conflicting necessities, and interests, and wants, that an angel could arrange everything with individual fitness. There must be mistakes, oversights, and cruelties. Charles would be wrong to take the thing in bitterness, especially as fate seems inclined to make him amends in the gift of pure and disinterested support, to supply the official patronage."

Naomi coloured, and was silent.

Political differences were discussed, political partizanship carried on at Shute field, with all the seriousness that Naomi required. Mr. O'Dowd and his guards had few doubts that England was approaching a popular outbreak, to which those of Pevensey would be child's play. Mr. Dexter, the Tory candidate, felt equally that in his personal defence was carried on *pro aris et focis*, that after such as him came the debt George Pevensey was equally zealous

single-minded, furthering, as he thought, the great moral revolution, which should emancipate the trading and dissenting mind of England from aristocratic and episcopal supremacy. Mr. Dexter's friends, however, did not trust to the strength or seriousness of their convictions, nor of those of their followers; for they organized all the old means of carrying a popular election. They had music and pastime for the frivolous, drink for the thirsty, money for the greedy and unprincipled, feasting for the jovial, with all the machinery of intimidation got up in a band of bravos, prepared to recur to force so as to drive away the too timid or too numerous voters. The *locos*, seeing the appeal to physical force, were not behind-hand in preparing for a struggle of the kind; and whilst Michund marshalled his buffs, Thaddeus and others disciplined their blues. No one was so much distressed at this mode of partizanship as George Pevensey, who threatened to withdraw if he was supported by the sledge or by riot. Thaddeus argued it was self-defence.

"Do you arm yourself from false friends,"

said Thaddeus, "we'll take care of the open enemies."

"What false friends have I?" asked Pevensy.

"There's Mr. Plynlimon, who pretends to be your friend, and to my knowledge he has lent his aid to Omichund, to net all the fellows he can for the Poyntztett interest."

"If the Worksworth interest fail me," said George, "I shall have small chance."

"Never fear; we can frighten Plynlimon into good behaviour at any rate. But I fear that it is the aim of the buffs to get up a row before the election, so as to get the *locos* into some wicked scrape, frighten the snobs into Tory voting, and get rid of us by some sweeping accusation of conspiracy, or treason perhaps."

What Thaddeus feared was too true. Mr. Dexter's mob grew every day more furious and more provocative; and, strange to say the operatives of Shuttlefield, though in general bordering upon the extreme of democracy, were still, many of them, more favourable to the upper class candidate than to the middle class one.

It was marvellous how generally people voted in a contrary sense to their professions and their interests, and in truth, in the whirl of alarm, cajolery, intimidation of conscience, of deception, and of violence, it soon became an affair of chance-medley how the election would turn. The four days' polling passed with some skirmishes, but no very serious riots. Mr. O'Dowd was far a-head on the poll, and out of all danger, in the high estimate of the united wisdom of Shuttlefield; but Pevensey and Dexter were neck and neck; and towards the close it was evident that the victory would be achieved by certain cunning voters, who had held back, and who, no doubt, did so for the purpose of receiving a high consideration for their casting votes.

Amongst these holders back, were a goodly lot in the pay of Plynlimon, who had promised the Tories, if he could, to keep them from the poll altogether, as their votes, if they did attend, would infallibly be registered for Pevensey. This could alone counterbalance the score, or couple of score of the venal, who must fall to Omichund as the sole briber and the highest bidder. Thaddeus, therefore, as a last resource, found admission to the presence

of the redoubtable Mr. Plynlimon, and warned that gentleman, to his astonishment, of a placard which revealed certain passages of his life and conduct, calculated to impugn his character as a moral man, a factory-master, and a magistrate.

Plynlimon exclaimed against the calumny, and showed evident symptoms of a desire to wreak vengeance with his own powerful though pacific hands. But Thaddeus was a sturdy-faced and muscular youth,—one whom Plynlimon found himself not superior to in moral and physical courage.

"We are alone," said Thaddeus, "quite alone; and the town neither knows, nor shall know, what we do or say. I must have your men go to the poll and vote as they please, without any consequences to them."

"What consequences, Sir, could there be?" said Plynlimon. "I merely wished to keep them from a bloody riot, for riot I am assured there is to be. If they wish to mingle in it—and Mr. Pevensey solicits their aid—their be the risk, whosoever will the gain."

The crowd around the hustings were already celebrating, with uproar, Dexter's presumed victory, rendered apparently secure by recent

tes, when Thaddeus came hastily with the inforcement of those whom Plynlimon had put back, and this evidently restored the priority to Pevensey. The resentment of the buffs was tremendous, and the desire to engage, if not to retrieve defeat, great. But passion was smothered till the result of the trial was declared. It told that George Pevensey was returned with O'Dowd for the borough of Shuttlefield.

The announcement awoke a discordant howl from the many who had absorbed good pay and good drink, and were generous enough to care to give value for both. They accordingly began an indiscriminate onslaught upon their supposed enemies. The hustings were not expected, but torn up for weapons; and it was with difficulty the civic officers got off with their books and whole skins. The worthy shopkeepers soon got behind their doors and shutters; and the storm fell upon the *locos*, who fortunately kept together, making at first a retreating fight, until the excitement of the row, and the knowledge of the cause, spread largely through the operatives, even just emerging from their work—those, at least, who had attended to it on that day.

After all, the feelings of the majority—those of the independent and unpaid—were with Pevensey. His was the great cause of discontent, his the “sacred language” of grievance; those of his opponents, real servility, false jollity and corruption. Accordingly, the faction of the blues gathered strength in their retreat, and recruiting in number and spirit, first checked, and then bore back their opponents. These strove, in return, to resist and maintain their ground around their chosen haunts of conviviality; but driven from their headquarters, the discomfited buffs sought refuge by climbing the park wall into the sacred precincts of Poyntzstett, within which they felt some claim to receive hospitality and succour. The manœuvre was not well judged, for the *locos* and their army were highly pleased at the pretext to penetrate the grounds of the great Duke, and to drive in dismay, to the mansion itself, the fugitive bands so lately enrolled by the ducal agents, and secured by his Grace’s largesses. The noise of battle, the cry of fugitive and freeman, the defiant shout of those who rallied and made fight, and the more triumphant clamour of the victors who drove them out, soon reached the mansion, and

called the members of its garrison to defence or rescue. The word ran that the mansion of Poyntzstett was aimed at and attacked—a threat once upon a time made, and ever after idly feared, and to which an election riot, half fight, half frolic, gave semblance and reality.

The rush of domestics, stewards, game-keepers, with all the hangers-on of a great mansion, to the rescue of the buffs, reanimated the contest, and gave it quite another aspect. Had the vanquished dispersed or suffered defeat in the wood, there would have been an end of the strife, for the *locos* had really no ulterior project. But the Duke's men felt their lord's property and privacy invaded, as well as his mansion threatened, and they came, some of them with firearms, to its defence. The old Duke himself was in a frenzy of excitement. Mr. Omichund had come to announce the defeat of Dexter, and of course the readiest excuse for failure lay in the riot. Master and servant, therefore, at the mansion were actuated by fear and vengeance. In vain did the more prudent of the pursuers seek to call off their companions. It seemed dangerous as well as disgraceful to beat a

crime. The aggressors, or apparent aggressors, therefore, stood their ground, unceasingly, until their future conduct or steps, unfortunately a shot from the fowling-piece one in the ducal ranks wounded a tower. His fall could have but one of two results, either to set the invading party scampering in terror back to their streets and towns, or to exasperate them to some fiercer vengeance than had been contemplated by them.

The Englishman abhors the use of arms against fellow-countrymen, and it, be it ever so much provoked, as a base and unwarrantable act. It was so in the present case ; for the reply to it was an instant and simultaneous charge of the duke and of those who followed them, which drove away those who stood in defence before him.

of evening augmented the confusion, and in the midst of it, it was discovered that the offices were on fire.

In the heat of the tumult, there were too many who regarded this as a triumph, and raised at once a shout of exultation; but Thaddeus and the greater number were struck with the enormity of the event, the use to which it would be turned, and the facilities of vengeance which it would place in the hands of the Earl and Omichund, against those who had the misfortune at once to be present and to be obnoxious to these ruling powers. The efforts of Thaddeus were immediately directed towards extinguishing the flames. The first burst of the conflagration had acted like a beacon to Shuttlefield, which poured forth its hive of operatives, and its horde of authorities, constables, and firemen.

George Pevensey had ridden to his father's, himself to communicate the good tidings of his being member for the borough. Nor had he done receiving the congratulations of the old man and of his sister, and recounting to all what he owed to the exertions of Thaddeus, when a blaze, such as seldom lit the firmament, shot up from amidst the woods of

Poyntzstett. The first anxiety was the field, but there were no tall chimneys excepting the brightness of the flame. The sharp and anxious eye of Rachel soon saw that it was Poyntzstett which burned. The old man was horror-struck, George at such a catastrophe on the evening of an election, and perhaps growing on his mind. Rachel thought what part Thaddeus might play, or unwittingly, might have been the cause of an event, that could not fail to affect the county.

Pevenscy lost no time in mounting his horse, and pressing it at full speed toward the scene of the conflagration. At first he saw all the woods, and even many a village beyond their precincts. But when the bright flame sunk in height and intensity, and Pevenscy had the pleasure of concluding that the mansion itself probably not suffered.

It were difficult to experience feelings more anxious than those with which he rode down the avenue in the lurid light, marking the place which had gathered in front of the mansion. He kept at a distance by constables of the police. Precious furniture had in great

been conveyed from the edifice to the safer *locale* of the greensward. But this care had ceased. The fire had merely singed a wing of the mansion ; it had consumed the offices, and was still completing their destruction ; but it had been got under, and there were evidently no fears for the mansion of Poyntzstett.

Any congratulations that might have arisen for the preservation of the mansion were, however, considerably darkened by the intelligence, at first crudely given, that the Duke had perished in the flames. And true it was that the conflagration had this fatal effect. It was not, however, from actual contact with the fire that the old Duke expired. But the first excitement and subsequent shock of the place burning out was such, that the old noble sunk under them, expiring not in the flames or the ruins of his family mansion, but rather in the hour of its timely rescue.

CHAPTER III.

WE must now allow some time to pass unchronicled over the heads of personages. Life itself is very apt to pass thus *per saltum*, full of stirring eventful sensations, and abrupt changes of space, with intervals during which existence slumbers. In one of these Naomi V. Worth had become a denizen of the new world. She had come to town, not as a casual visitor, but in her own right. She had fitted out a splendid mansion and furnished it with brilliancy and splendour, and for the filling it with acquaintances and guests, she had placed herself in the hands of a lady of acknowledged position in the upper world of society. This lady would only undertake the task on the condition of despotic and uncontrollable power in the business of invitation and exclusion.

er with *carte blanche* in all that regarded e ; so that Naomi for a time found ' unable to ask her own friends to her ome. She pleaded for the admission of n vain, that of others she obtained with ty. The radical Pevensey, despite of rliamentary success, was, for example, excluded, whilst such unexceptionable ters as the Honourable Fitzroy Fitz- found ready admission. Some of these nt slights,—this sacrifice of friendship to pearance of fashion,—went to Naomi's more than even the ambiguities and ions with which she had reproached in her political predilections. But the necessity of entering the world under r's laws and guidance was her excuse. world she was very zealously bent on ating into and getting around her ; not ny new or exaggerated idea of either its n or its worth ; but, after all, it was a pastime, an interesting game, in con- ting which, even when not actually g a stake in it, one might forget indi- troubles and personal cares. Her reli- riends told her that the pleasures and upations into which she was launching

were all vanity. Naomi admitted the world to be vanity, but not a jot more vanity than a solitude made up of nothings, and a life sketched out by routine.

And where was Charles Delmer? Had not the bold, the generous, and, for a woman, the chivalrous step, of procuring his election as a county member, removed the distinctions that delicacy and unequal fortune raised between them? Apparently not; for, although Charles was a frequent visitor at Miss Workworth's, and passed even for a suitor, he by no means took the rank of a favoured or certain one. Charles apparently had made a vow not to marry, except from the elevated platform of a political position; and that his electoral triumph had not facilitated, or perhaps even advanced. The ministerial chief, though a quiet, was something of an obstinate man. He had very little consideration for those of his party who did not, in his opinion, sufficiently consider his difficulties, and placed their personal pretensions above all obstacles and all excuse. A place had been offered to Charles after his re-election, a place not despicable in emolument, but it was not one usually conferred upon the rising or the

trusted. Charles declined, and was not sorry to have an excuse for doing so, and remaining independent for a time. There is no exigency of a party, or of a party chief, more galling or destructive to a talented politician than that which commands his utter silence on, or indeed off, the benches of the House of Commons. A quarrel with his chief thus sets the young politician free to take up a subject, master it, bring it forward unshackled by the exigencies or difficulties of his party, and thus keep himself alive in the world's attention. To some, indeed, this is the only chance of life. Men who cannot make a repartee, improvise a spirited answer, or rush to the rescue at a critical moment, have no chance but to seize a subject, and make it their *cheval de bataille*. But all the good steeds of their stud are seized and monopolized by the chiefs; and a young statesman is necessarily reduced to seize an old hack, or mount a worn-out hobby, to air his parts of speech and eloquence thereon.

Charles, to recover his liberty, or mark that he was possessed of it, had transferred his seat from behind the ministerial bench to that limbo of discontented politicians, the seats

below the gangway. Opposition, like p introduces a man to strange bed-f And although he did not make one little Mountain of ultra-Liberalism an contentism which so often and so vented its spleen on the ministry of its he still had a desultory seat on the o of that political fold, either before or it. The House of Commons has seldo a party concentrated together of more and more impracticability, more inte power and less political success. feared to mingle with it, lest he shc suspected of its deep malcontentisr conscious, too, that he would not be ciated. Their manner and thoughts v wider than his, and their aims wide for if Charles was attached to anything to the peculiarly old English character constitution, whilst the new school of looked to far greater changes and d ments than history, or, at least, the cis- history of the English nation, had yet of. Charles, too, though gloomy hims not like permanent ill-temper and sple did not understand the cause of such Radical Mountain. That cause, had

flected, he might have found in the fact that the party was in a transition state; too considerable, too popular, too respondent to the thoughts of a large mass of thinking people, to be any longer the mere appendage of an aristocratic party like the Whigs: and yet, with all these elements of growth, they had not yet reached fulness and consistency of numbers, ideas, and aims, which would entitle them to set up as an independent and self-subsistent party.

Delmer was much bantered for his shyness of radical connexion by a man of whose sagacity he had a high opinion, and who had shown him a great deal of sympathy and kindness in his recent state of dereliction and soreness. None stood higher in the ranks of the great Liberal or Whig party than Simon Sagacis. He was wealthy, independent, well skilled in all things, and well known in all scenes political. He was one of the oldest members of the House, had been one of the prime actors and movers in the councils and deeds of the Liberal party when in opposition. He had ruled in their cabinets when in power, as well as in their *conciliabula* before they attained it; yet he had not accepted, or

ambitioned, high and prominent office. He much preferred moving political puppets from a snug seat behind the scenes, to coming forward himself and acting on the great stage. Sagacis was no flatterer, no man to talk in the humour of his company. He was on equally good terms with high Whig and pure Radical—nay, was one of the Liberals, best received, listened to, and liked, by the Tories. Yet he never spoke in the vein of each; on the contrary, his cue was contradiction. With the Whigs, his usual associates and real friends he abetted downright Radicalism, abused them for their backwardness, their exclusiveness, their timidity. He advised real and sweeping reform, and was one of those whose voices had rendered the great Bill so efficient as it was. But he never vapoured, or even argued, in that way to the Radicals. On the contrary, to them he preached moderation; to them he pointed out what nullities they were if the aristocracy of England, with all its influence, should turn away in disgust from Liberalism, and leave the mere Radicals to advance it. Sagacis on the same day would preach boldness to Lord John, and moderation to Cobden. He could talk Lord Melbourne

into being a Liberal, and Molesworth into not being a Puritan; and he could break the onslaught of opposition by tickling the vanity of Brougham, or turning the ire of Lyndhurst by a jest. But if the activity of Sagacis was often useful, it was at times mischievous: for ~~not~~ he would not. To believe that all was well, and might safely be let alone, was impossible to him. The securest administration, ~~is~~ in his opinion, always wanted propping; the most complete combination always wanted adding to; and no measure could be perfect unless Sagacis doctored it. And all these views and opinions of his were conceived with such sincerity, but proved with such ingenuity, and ministered with so much that was really wise and irrefragably true, that he was at once a Daniel and a Solomon.

Simon Sagacis, though a genuine Whig, was not a bigoted one. He was for a liberal policy, and measures introduced, worked out, and administered *for* the people, but not *by* them. He was for having the country governed by its men of wealth, cultivation, and learning, but by the liberal and popular section of these men. But though a Whig in all this, Simon was not a Whig to the extent of

believing that the essence of the party and the name consisted in fealty to half-a-dozen families, or reverence to two or three very empty and very solemn big-wigs. Sagaci saw not the least harm in a young and talented member of Parliament flinging off the aristocratic prejudices of the university, an bidding defiance even to Holland House and its growing clique, in order to mount the popular stump, and show the public that they could be gentlemanly as well as vulgar Radicals. He thought this extremely useful; he deemed nothing so dangerous as the sinking of a gulf between Whig and Radical, with mutual proscription of any who leaped from one side to the other, or even lounged on the borders. Simon even said that it was political to have the confines of the two parties mingled and confounded, that it would be impossible to trace a plain line of demarcation. Sagaci saw no harm in the world in Delmer making a campaign with the Radicals. He would keep his hand in, and his ire up, and if he produced measures, would heighten his standing in the country.

"I should not like to brave social proscription," said Charles.

"You may have fewer invitations to select circles, and less cordial nods of recognition at Brookes'."

"I have lived so long in the smiles and respect of the magnates, that really their frowns would pain me."

"Even when you feel it to be unjust?"

"Even then. There is no appeal from social condemnation. To lose a whole circle of friends is the worst infliction to a man, be he ever so right, who knows not where, even if he had the courage, to make new ones."

"Yet, what good friends the Whigs and the Benthamites remain, though they start from different points of the compass."

"But they were long in opposition together; and Jeremy was a rich man and a philosopher. Benthamism is a negation of all existing institutions, and so were the Whigs till they reached power. And, indeed, I have no objection to act with that view,—to quiz the Chancellor, dumbfounder the lawyers, and indulge in theory and sarcasms. Benthamism was a well-bred, well-to-do, intellectual, *comme il faut* democracy. Manchester has brought out a practical, searching *bourgeoise* version of it, which has revealed all the hidden odium,

and washed away all the agreeable .
The school of Bentham may revive as
sophy, but where is it in politics ?”

If Charles required motives for no
ing himself to be confounded with th
of extreme reform, which, in truth,
not require, he would have found one
circumstance that George Pevensey ha
his stand there, and had cleverly distin
himself on many occasions. He had th
est respect and the greatest dislike
vensey, as a man in all things his c
Pevensey was of altogether a new
elevated out of the jargon of the un
and politically bred out of the close
party. He did not even worship his
of Manchester. Strongly as he
middle-class antagonism to squires and
he took care not to imitate John B
showing it ; and although the working
of his youth had been drab, and
thought far too much honour, influen
precedence conceded to the soldier
profession, he was far too prudent to
Cobden in denouncing those heroic
which make an essential part of the
fibre. Indeed, he was not only too j

but too much of a man and an Englishman, not to feel reverence and sympathy for that undaunted courage which had conquered freedom at home and empire abroad. Economy was another household virtue of Pevensey's class and education. He saw sufficiently that the entire scheme of English administration was built on the contrary principle—that of calculated and purposed extravagance; yet he scarcely dared to cripple the resources of a country, disarm, or disable it, in order to starve out even a corrupt or aristocratic administration. The greatest and most trying of all Pevensey's achievements—that for which Delmer envied him the most, and that in which he saw the strongest germ of future influence and success—was that he spoke from the ultra-Liberal bench a speech upon the Church and education question; and, nevertheless, won for himself attention, adhesion, and applause.

The most difficult question for an English public man to handle, is a religious question. There is scarcely a platform from which a man can speak, that allows any fair chance of his being listened to, or at least appreciated by his opponents. Education, one should think,

might have been left an open question no—not a word is or can be spoken on that is not, like religious polemics, tagonism. And, although religious may be considered the purest ones, are those which most meet obloquy public assembly. The greatest want Liberal party in the English Parliament has been, and still is, a powerful and respeaker, to be the organ of English Parliament has high Church speakers, no Church speakers old Church of England speakers, imp Church of Rome speakers, and even Catholic speakers. It has specimens perhaps, all and every species of But a high and able man, who, like Shaftesbury when in the House of Commons would put religion above all political aversion, and who would speak, not on any Church platform, but from the ground of dissent—what influence such might wield!

No one attempts it, however. Who speaks upon that side on such questions so in the spirit of some narrow sect, or in the spirit of a too wide sect, neither knows

confines nor followers ; or, again, as a member of the Established Church, who careth for none of these things, like Mr. Hume, boldly and materially ; or like Mr. Roebuck, timidly and sparingly, representing the school of Bentham. All these are well in their way, but not one has got hold of the right stump, and a powerful stump it would be, whence an orator, in calm dissent from Rome, and as calm dissatisfaction with the Church of England, would speak the wants and ideas of the great religious mind of the country, in reference to general politics and education. Perhaps it was destined to George Pevensey, to take this ground in opposition. He had the required calm, conscience, and gravity for it, and seemed likely to put forth another requisite characteristic—that of being neither anxious for place, nor jealous of those who possessed it.

“If that man could live twenty years, he would be a great man,” said Delmer to Sagacis, next whom he was sitting during a speech of Pevensey’s.

“Five will be enough,” said Sagacis, “at this rate of growing,—and no gross mistakes.”

“I mean with no change of principle or party.”

"So do I," said Sagacis. "You think it is the party and the principles of radicalism, that are obnoxious. I don't think so. I think it is the persons, the individualism of those gentlemen, that are obnoxious. That is the reason why I have often counselled some of the young Whigs, all redolent of aristocratic prejudices, to shake them off, and take service in the radical ranks. They want officers, and all insurgent causes do."

"Yes, but they don't like foreign officers. Look at the member for Wolverhampton: he entered the insurgent service, as you call it, as a middy. He has grown up amongst them, and still is not one of them. They can no more trust the well-born, than Danton could Egalité."

"What matter whom they trust? Theirs is not yet a religion, nor their organization a hierarchy. They are merely a band of men, each hanging by a popular thread. Roebuck hangs as independent from Sheffield, as Baines from Leeds, or Cobden from Stockport and the West Riding; and whatever dislike of an upper class there may be in the people's representatives, there is none in the people. The party have not power to exclude a gentleman,

as long as the English people desires one, and the English people does. For the place of popular hero, a Burdett has a far better chance than any Manchester man."

"Yes, but a Burdett is impossible."

"And Molesworth?"

"He is afraid to soil his 'Bloody Hand.' He is a well-read, reflective, amiable gentleman; but without the ready use of either speech or thought, that passes current. Your gentleman of the present day, is either too book-learned, or too exclusive, or too empty. In old times, society did more for a man, and study less. There was more of racy notions in the man that started fresh. England seems as incapable, at present, of producing a Burdett, as of producing a Cobbet."

"Jacobi would say that land and labour went unrepresented; and that money alone, and money-makers, had the gift of the gab."

"That brings us back to Mr. Pevensey, a man of money, though not rich, and of business; and who, with his business-like ideas and logic, seems to go steadily forward, whilst your men of wit and scholarship are lagging."

"You are right, Charles. The school of counting-house and factory will, as soon as its

that political wisdom has descended to from their fathers, or is to be acquire mere yawning and prating, instead of attacked and mastered, as one of the difficult and laborious of human science

The advice of Sagacis to serve a campaign, was temptation the first Charles had to encounter, and which, from virtue, taste, or inertness, he refused. There were men in a far less eminent position than Sagacis, who were equally restless were envious, which he was not, and were ready to draw a great party of rocks, for no higher purpose than to set some planks for themselves from the The worst of governing a country despotism is that objections are silenced, disapproved, and that conspiracy is in

palace, with barred doors and closed windows, no friend of his knowing even as much as the exact bed-room in which he sleeps. When such a chief exacts obedience without giving confidence, his conduct generates a conspiracy. It would be hard, in the present instance, to call the acts of the great chief tyranny. He lived, indeed, as Cicero might have lived,—had been appointed Dictator,—in his Tusculan villa, seeing a few friends, corresponding with a few philosophers; but, for the most part, making associates only of his own family, and his own thoughts; and appearing to the public only when he ascended the rostrum, and poured forth the result of his solitary meditations, in a flow of rare and reflective eloquence.

Charles had no sooner a flagrant cause of complaint against his chief, than he was immediately made to learn of a wide conspiracy against him of his own friends. The complaint at one moment was, that he was not liberal enough—that he put forth no bold scheme or measure, to distinguish him sufficiently from his great rival, and take the popular wind from Peel's sails. Other members of the administration were pointed out, as much

found disgust, Charles listened to the
thered murmurs of selfish discontent
tale of dissensions amongst high per
which had none, or but slight existen
loathed the premature activity of the
gots, which are always present in t
politic, as in the body personal, and
to take advantage of the first symp
dissolution, to prey upon the vital
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avenged himself of his chief, by some
proof of his own superiority and merit
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But to go eaves-dropping, and in
supposing differences, and creating
the bare supposition, Charles Delme
have preferred to rest upon the s
confess himself superannuated at thi

tone to the political feelings and tendencies of the English, that they had for many years received. This was the revolution in Paris,—given rise to by a trifle of a question, and achieved by a handful of men; both of which triumphed over the political interests and the most numerous army,—how, none could divine, least of all the actors.

The first impression made by such a catastrophe, and by those which followed it, were that it would fling the country into some widely democratic state or measure. If Paris of 1830 precipitated Reform, what would not that of 1848 do? The Tories alarmed, suspended opposition. The ultra-Liberals cried out for larger concessions, but, alarmed themselves at the political excitement, deemed it imprudent to press them. Domestic politics thus became interrupted. The eyes of all were turned abroad, as upon a great spectacle. Home was forgotten, or if remembered, it was to accomplish merely what was needful. Political action was impossible, and such men as Delmer, however in a position to think entirely of self, could not do so, but gave all their interest to that great game, in which individual fortunes were as nothing.

statesman whose confidence was in-
shaken, whose courage was nowise a-
and whose aim and desire, the mom-
storm arose, seemed to be to enact t
of Addison's angel, to ride and dir
tempest. This was Lord Tiverton.
wonderful that a statesman so well stri-
years, whose hair had not indeed grow-
—that it never could, with so young a h-
it to root in—should have cherished h-
allowed an enthusiasm to kindle with
that even the youth of England hesi-
felt. For there was quite as much f-
mistrust, as admiration at the su-
insurrection, over which blind chan-
brute courage seemed alone to preside
Lord Tiverton seemed to take it for
that the hour of absolutism had passe-

England, as the chief of constitutional and the foremost of civilized countries. Lord Tiverton thought that the present storm had swept for ever from the earth all his personal and political foes, and that something far better might be made of what succeeded them, however anomalous and rude and difficult to deal with they might be.

Had Lord Tiverton been a Yankee, a member of Congress, or an ex-member of Congress, who had taken office, and wielded, like Webster, those diplomatic thunders, which burst at times from the firmament of stars and stripes, he would have drawn after him the whole population of the Union, and like another Napoleon, the Napoleon of statesmanship, precipitated the New World to restore the balance of the Old. But unfortunately Lord Tiverton was not a Yankee, but the minister of an aristocratic system of governing, himself the old upholder of the government of the select, and a man who had never personally or seriously condescended to hold equal intercourse with the *plebs*, even of the middle classes, to whom on such an occasion as this he must appeal for sympathy.

When Lord Tiverton therefore mounted his

charger, like another St. George, and put his lance in rest to succour the unfortunate, who were only liberating themselves from the fangs of the dragon, no party followed him and no class. The Whigs, a timid party, knowing they had not a sixpence to spend, nor any mode of extracting it from the country, bethought of the last campaign of expenditure, that had swept them from office. The Radicals saw nothing but an obnoxious aristocrat setting forth on a venture. The knight-errant was so obnoxious to them, that instead of generously seconding his chivalrous aims, they merely prayed that he might break his neck, and secretly resolved to aid circumstances to effect so desirable a purpose. The Tories more generous, felt more sympathy mingle with their hostility, but of course the latter predominated. Of his very colleagues, his rivals openly condemned Lord Tiverton, whilst even his friends tried to hang on by his skirts, and so keep his back. One friend alone, the Premier, stood sincerely and staunchly by him, admired his zeal, appreciated the sincerity of his enthusiasm, saw that, after all, it was an English feeling, however little the English might understand it, and decided in his own

mind that, all Whig as he was, he would not see the last disciple of Canning go forth to do battle with the Philistines of absolutism, without supporting him even beyond the limits of the prudent.

But if no party went with Lord Tiverton, the generous of all parties did ; and Charles, for one, forgot all personal griefs, and flung to the winds all Opposition or semi-Opposition advantages, by cordially adhering to that adventurous policy, which deemed the House of Austria shaken to the basis, ecclesiastical power compelled to yield to civil freedom, and the two great countries of Italy and Germany regenerated and rendered independent as the consequence of the great revolution. In vain did Sagacis warn Charles not to stake his reputation and hopes on the valour of a Piedmontese army, or the moderation of a Slavonian mob. In vain did the Whig magnates hint, that a liberal movement which crushed all aristocracy, and would have no upper house, must end in anarchy. In vain did Jacobi hint, that whatever was the result of present disorders, whether the triumph of anarchy or the restoration of tyranny, either would set up the conservatives again in Eng-

land, from the panic such events would cause, and the necessities they would create. But none of these councils or prognostications could smother that genuine liberal feeling, which led Charles to hope for Europe, and to applaud those also who hoped and laboured for its liberation.

Chance threw Charles at the time in the way of the great Pygmalion, who was chary of his speech, and never bestowed his confidence. But Charles was a loose fish of the moment, and might be won. The cautious statesman therefore deigned to talk with him; and Delmer was astonished to perceive in so great and accomplished a man, at once a large ignorance of European politics, and an utter indifference to them. It seemed as though he had from time to time fathomed certain questions of foreign politics separately, each for itself, for the moment, and for parliamentary use. But a comprehensive, wide, lofty view, even in a Tory sense, Peel had not of foreign politics. They were *caviare* to him. He was immersed in the great social questions of English politics and life, which he felt he had done much to solve, and he really thought others not worth attention. And if he did ever look to Europe,

it was merely to beware lest it, in its entanglements, should cause England trouble or expense. This very mean and very prudent mode of viewing the political affairs of the world—a mode founded on ignorance and indifference—was shown much more largely, and followed much more generally, by the middle and upper classes of English life, than Lord Tiverton's generous hopes and adventurous interference. Charles was ashamed of his country, as well as of its greatest statesman. Countries, however, he reflected, must grow old, as well as individuals, and with age must come prudence and indifference. A truth, however, he thought, never could grow old, however dominant classes might outlive strength and spirit. The people are never ungenerous, never selfish; and if English aristocracy has lost its chivalry, the English democracy can supply its place. That is, the true democracy, not the representatives of the lukewarm, money-making, middle-class community. Such was the sneer with which Charles vented his indignation at his Radical compeers.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Honourable Mrs. Rushout, into whose hands Naomi had consigned herself, recommended, or rather ordered, that she should altogether forget that there were any such things as politics or literature. Incidentally the former might come in very well, as enhancing the importance of friends or acquaintances; but the great world of London was independent of either, and very jealous of any other claim to distinction than those of birth, wealth, and fashion.

The peculiarity of the London high world is, as foreigners remark, its fulness. There is such a plenty of men and women, veterans and youths, wealthy dowagers, and marriageable damsels, elder brothers inheriting every good, and younger brothers possessing all that compensates for wealth,—that there is no need

roducing one foreign element, one person
other class, to complete a muster already
ll, or vary a world which recognises no
pleasures or ideas than its own. Abroad
is no aristocracy numerous, wealthy,
ecognised sufficiently to constitute its
xclusive society, or self-satisfied enough
ice for its own amusement. No Bohe-
r Hungarian magnate could pass a life
ip with others of his kind ; he must
nen of the arts to vary his intellectual
f men of science are wanting, and men
losophy and literature be too dangerous.
is no country, even the most barbarous,
ch the aristocrat does not feel the neces-
having social intercourse and intellec-
terchange with classes below him,—the
the professional, the intellectual. Your
Englishman alone can hold aloof, and
e himself exclusively and satisfactorily
ideas, the countenance, the approbation,
musements, and acquirements of those
ive just like himself. Nothing, therefore,
monotonous and consistent as English
y.

mere numbers of those entitled to
e in high English life, is alone sufficient

to close the door against the ambitious or the supernumeraries of another class. No house is large enough, no patience or civility inexhaustible enough, no strength or endurance powerful enough for a wider reception, which would admit the second rank of claimants for admission to society,—the professional, the gentle, the proudly mercantile, the intellectual,—who keep craving for admission for their wives and daughters to the society above them. Hence those apearings of what they cannot bodily mingle in or enjoy. Hence the moneyed vying and exclusiveness, in turn directed towards those below them, and the consequent stupidity and stagnation of ideas.

The fortunes, the evils, the characters, the talents and peculiarities, the hopes and follies, the adventures, the oddities, sometimes the crimes of their compeers, the wealthy and well-born and powerful world of England, form of themselves a great and varied scene of interest,—fully as great as novelist could invent or combine. The great fortunes, great positions, great capabilities of happiness and influence, lost and won, carefully attained or recklessly thrown away,—give an interest to this class of life which the more ignoble car-

tainly do not possess. Of these, though the biography of a great mammoth, like George Hudson, may offer a portentous example of the exciting and curious, such instances are rare. The upper world of England is certainly a great stage, on which is played a drama of great interest, however dull at times the action.

For all her wealth and amiability, Naomi received a world of slights ; could she have perceived the gravity, the malignity of them, she would probably have fled to Highfield's, or ensconced herself at once in a side circle of society. But Mrs. Rushout, whilst subjecting her to a secondary *role* in her own house, also spared her the consciousness of numerous mortifications, which she saw others receive and swallow with all the patience of martyrdom. New as she was, and nothing as she was in society, there were still persons who used supplication to be admitted to her portals, just as one might solicit a place, and dun for it in a ministerial ante-chamber. And upon inquiry she found that there was no great house whose doors were not assailed by the importunities of many to enter, whom one would have supposed in pride immeasurably above such meanness. People marvel at the

pride and apparent importance of the English higher classes, forgetting that they are mere creations and results of the meanness of those below them. The novelist who would dare to cull and relate half-a-dozen anecdotes of this kind from real life, without a shadow of exaggeration, would be set down as a maligner, not merely of English society, but of the dignity of human nature itself.

Naomi's ambition, at least her purpose, was to approach near to,—if not to enter,—that Olympus of English society, which Mrs. Rushout characterised as uninfluenced by the vulgar ideas of politics or literature. In getting into a position which allowed of knowing everybody and everything, at least by reflection, (for at a certain height all compartments of the social edifice disappear, and one sees from one end of it to the other,) Naomi felt as gratified as the æronaut or the explorer of the hyperborean regions. The pride of successful attainment or discovery was ample and delightful; but the region left nothing to remark save the desirableness of descending from it. And yet the *cælicolæ*, whom she could see and study, seemed beings amiable and simple, anxious to cultivate the same habits and virtues which

one finds in the humblest life ; and, moreover, anxious to cultivate them in the same ignorance. The sole difference was, that the ignorance of those of the lowest grade of society was forced by education and occupation, but cherished by the upper as a distinction and privilege. But, in fact, there was great similitude between the habits and characteristics of those at the top and those at the bottom of the social scale. The light that enlightened both, burned in the middle, amongst the intellectual and busy classes, who held actively their minds and senses, and kept ideas flying externally. On the rays of light which strayed from these fires, the upper class lived, and saw as the lower class did ; but the former imagined that the light came from themselves, or descended to them from their ancestors, or was an *apanage* of their high condition. To imagine that their Olympus was but earth, could not enter into their range of possibilities ; they were all-wise from an inner light, and considered that with this light, they still illumined and governed the universe, even at the time they were borrowing from the vulgar world below the sparks which illumed the flames of their

farthing candles. Here, however, was the region of wealth and power, and here men had influence over the destinies of thousands; and hence the interest which the *coelicole* took in each other, so as to be absorbed in each other's personal characters and acts and fortunes. These formed the *pabulum* of their minds, the material of their conversation; leaving the dull facts and things and progress of the world, to the *Dii minorum gentium*, who ruled the far inferior world of politics, philosophy, and letters.

Nothing could have proved more successful than the plan which Naomi had been advised to adopt; but which in truth she had adopted without knowing well whither it would lead. Her object was curiosity and a thirst of knowledge, more than vanity or a desire to shine. But whatever it was, Mrs. Rushout's unrivalled cleverness accomplished fully what she deemed was expected of her; that is, she estranged Naomi from all her old acquaintances, drew her away from every house and every converse with which her birth, connexions, and education would make her sympathise, and flung her amongst persons with whose air and aspect she was fascinated, as the Hindoo with

the starry stare of his bejewelled and be-
owned idol; and whom she had been so
ought to fear as divinities, that to know and
subt them was a work of time.

But the *chef d'œuvre* of Mrs. Rushout's
management was the admission of Miss Work-
sworth to the circle and the intimacy of the
friend of —, one of the most tasteful,
and clever, most insolent, and most wor-
shipped peeresses of her day: that day indeed
was, if not past, at least on the decline;
but the *reflex* remained, and the prestige and
influence, the knowledge and mastery of the
great world. Naomi Worksworth in her
father's manufacturing abode, surrounded by
the rigid education of sect, and the Countess
—, when in her zenith, the pursued of
power, and adored of nobles, guided by a
ridiculous code, self-indulgent and lax,—were,
perhaps, at the two antipodes of moral being.
What a freak of fortune to put them so soon
in juxtaposition,—to make one serve the other,
to be protected and patronized in turn!

The Countess was well-pleased with the
arrangement that had placed Naomi at her feet.
She was a superb fortune, which she of course
would dispose of in favour of the friend she

selected,—for who could question her skill and right in match-making? The homage of one so fair, so rich, and young, had also its charm; for the present generation of women and of matrons amongst the *cælicolæ* has somewhat of aversion for the last. George the Fourth, that immaculate person, had breathed a very impure breath upon the first rank of females which composed his world of fashion and predilection. To have lived in his reign, and been seen at his court, were injurious, however unjustly so, to feminine reputation. Queen Victoria was a purist, who had a horror of those tastes of her uncle, and of much that prevailed in his time.

.This was a great mortification to several of the elder *cælicolæ*, who loved the royal household, and thought it their *apanage*; so much so, that on one memorable occasion they forbade the Tory chief of the day to take office unless they were allowed at the same time to force their way into the royal household, and carry it by storm. Times, habits, and influences, had much changed, even since then; but still it was evident that the *cælicolæ* considered the care of the sovereign's person, and attendance upon it, a more important

matter than the care and attendance on the political administration of the realm. A first lord of the treasury was potent; but what was he in comparison with a gold stick? Both required the same rank, the same gravity, the same discretion, the same mystery. State secrets were not more important than palatial ones; for an event that would diminish the popular respect for the sovereign was really more vital and irreparable than a new law which could not be carried, or a budget that broke down.

Naomi had numerous opportunities of discovering how greatly men are deteriorated by wealth and rank, unless power, and consequently fitting occupation, be superadded. How many high families might be considered as handed over to a vegetable existence, but for their younger members, whose intellects have been sharpened by hunger. How high did the Poyntz family stand? The three generations of these rose in her estimation, struggling as they were in their circumstances, endeavouring to keep up high rents, and a semblance of fortune, by making politics a business, a profession, and a speculation. Even this, which had appeared so mean to Naomi, now struck

her as intellectual industry, praiseworthy ambition, compared with that boasted independence which allowed the man of rank to sink into a mere lazzaroni. It was marvellous to perceive how such men were worshipped, and their position envied, their nullity of intellect and want of activity commiserated—when all was owing to their very position.

For a young woman to be married to one of these great nullities was the Countess's *beau idéal* of happiness. A man that gave no trouble, excited no attention, had lived a stranger to anxieties and to passions, and was absorbed in a few trivial and unobtrusive tastes,—such was a model husband, to leave to a woman the superior part to play; and the influence of high station was far better kept and wielded by a woman. The feudal, and the salic law, which considered the male as alone able to bear the burden, do the duties, and uphold the rights of the grandee, were not misplaced in those days of physical force. In ours, when society is the great tournament, where wit, intellect, address, beauty, accomplishments, all modes of command and fascination, exert their sway, woman is man's equal, if not his superior. When Naomi first

heard this philosophy expounded, she was still under the charm of the brilliant person who preached it. She thought it might be delightful to be in a position to dominate society herself, with her woman's mind, with partner she despised, putting her affections, and, if not domestic virtues, at least domestic happiness, under her feet as a thing of small account. How could such thoughts rest for moment in a young woman's mind? She had been disgusted and disappointed in the first dream of sinking her woman's nature and fortune, in the affections and fortunes of a man of superior intellect and aspirations, or, at least, in those of a man of ambition and political activity. She found enthusiasm, and, as she thought, affection wanting in this man, added to the hopes and struggles of the busy world. She was now trying what was considered a higher region, which she was not surprised to find heartless, for she had made up her mind to suppress all that required, or related to, heart, in her life calculations.

Although Lady —— expatiated to Naomi on the expediency of her making her wealth the stepping-stone to a high position, and of espousing a man of nullity and rank, such

converse was merely part of her Ladyship's fascination ; for she had, in truth, neither hopes nor intention of promoting Naomi to any such rank as her own. She knew how impossible it was, unless, indeed, her great fortune and more valuable peace of mind were sacrificed to some mendicant of rank, who would espouse her fortune merely for the pleasure of running through it, and would consign the woman for almost immediate contempt. But Naomi, she thought, would be flattered by such hopes and attentions to linger in her exclusive circle, and then, seeing the hopelessness of great prizes, fall at last the reluctant prey to some exquisite of her following. Had her Ladyship been sincere, her address might easily have removed the scruples and obstacles, whatever they were, which held back Mr., now Lord Poyntz ; but she detested the Young Englander, as a pedant and a professional politician.

As far as politics filtered through their atmosphere of personality and fashion, the *cœlicole* were in high delight. The revolution in Paris had occurred, and fulfilled their old and continued prediction that continental constitutionalism and citizen kings could lead to nothing save anarchy and saturnalia. Legitimist families

and connexions were in high hope and activity; and continental feelings were much what those of Englishmen who loved the Stuarts were in the last century, whenever the mob broke out, and Liberalism made a blunder. Fright drove a number of epicureans home. Lord Thesaurus, who could not live out of Paris a month at a time, now ran clear way from the spectre of the guillotine, which is imagination descried as immediately to be reduced, and daily exercised.

"Lord Thesaurus will be monstrously taken with your 40,000*l.* a-year, Miss Worksworth. It will prevent his sleeping. He will take all the steps, say all the compliments, (not the presents,) and make all the inquiries, as if he were about to put forth a proposal in person; and then, in dreadful dubiety and sickness of heart, afraid of losing a prize, or of being taken in by grasping at it, he will become petrified, remain motionless, and do nothing."

"Who is Lord Thesaurus?" asked Naomi.

"Not know Lord Thesaurus, who was such a spendthrift when he had no fortune, and has become as great a miser since he has had one—a man who has run such an ample career of vice, that he is virtuous from satiety?"

He fluttered from the university a pigeon, and recovered himself to be the sharpest of hawks. Having served his turn as prey, he makes use of his skill to prey on others. He loves nothing but money; stints himself of a mistress, not for morals, but for economy. His ambition is to marry an heiress and strangle her."

Lord Thesaurus himself entered almost at the moment; nothing could be so agreeable as his manner and converse, nothing more cordial than his reception.

Lord Midian had but one quality in common with Lord Thesaurus—that was, his fear of being taken in. His was one of the best cultivated and most amply stored minds in England, with an intellect fully equal to the stirring and the using of such masses of knowledge. But all was rendered perfectly null by a shyness, or bashfulness, passing that of girlhood. What a strange freak of Nature, to form a human being,—like Louis the Sixteenth, for example,—give him the command of millions of men, the absolute power over the most powerful nation in the world, with thousands waiting on his smile, and trembling at his power, and yet endow this prince

with a bashfulness that made him shrink from the gaze, and dread the converse of the humblest amongst his slaves. Lord Midian was an English peer, shy as Louis the Sixteenth, but with no state importance that could fix a clever, beautiful, blue-eyed and silver-tongued Marie Antoinette upon him. Lord Midian was the most desirable match in the ideas of the female *cœlicolæ*. But Lord Midian was as much afraid of being deceived in a woman as Lord Thesaurus; and, with his fortune and position, lived a solitary, sad, and intellectual bachelor, as Lord Thesaurus did a sensual one. So that a man may have birth, wealth, and fine intellect—good temper, warm heart, fine sensibility, and profound sagacity—yet lead a miserable existence. The want of a little nerve will suffice to nullify every other excellence and every other blessing.

Count Fascine was the most agreeable person of Lady ——'s intimacy. He was a French noble, who had got *declassé* in his country. His father had emigrated, but had forsaken Coblenz for St. Cloud, and the Count D'Artois for Bonaparte, of whom he had accepted a gold key and the office of Imperial Chamberlain. This the royalist aristo-

cracy never forgave; and his son, Count Fascine, however handsome, accomplished, and gallant, could never get the Duchess of Angoulême to pardon, nor even her of Berry to smile upon him. Young Fascine turned his back upon the Bourbons, and sought in London life that favour and position which the French court invidiously denied, and which the servility of the French would never allow wit and fashion to win for itself. Fascine thus became a denizen of the English world, where he effaced the Frenchman in him of all that was derogatory to social dignity, retaining all that was delightful to social *agrément*. How he carried on the war from the produce of the domain of Château Fascine, was a problem more often smiled and wondered at than answered. Fascine solved it, however, to his own satisfaction. He lived with the best, and on the best; did as other rich folks did; and people gave up inquiring how. He had married an English wife, and had buried her; but he was still, as ever, as little troubled with care as simple, and unambitious. What rendered him, indeed, so welcome in English life was that he had no aim, no ambition; at least, none that was apparent. He asked for no

place, tried to outrun no rival, except on a race-course or a hunting-field. He joined no party intrigue; cared not twopence for differences between Whig and Tory. He only asked to live the life of a splendid butterfly, and every one deemed him as harmless as that class of winged insect.

Fascine was not introduced to Naomi, nor did he at first, true to foreign habits, think it right to pay any attention to girlhood. But he soon perceived that Miss Worksworth's independent position gave her a *brevet*, of which he took advantage to address her. Fascine knew the English world, as no one else did, denizen as he was of it, not native; and to attain his denizenship he had found it necessary to make so profound and wide a study of it, that he could depict it either in little or in great, in a series of miniatures, or in a broad panorama. It struck Naomi that Fascine was in the great social world, what Macobi was in the great political, a Mephistopheles, that continually mocked all, yet sufficiently delighted with all he mocked as to win in its movement, and turn that, as far as was required, to his own profit.

It was impossible to point out anything

that Fascine said as either malignant or immoral, yet certainly the *ensemble* of his conversation led the hearer to condemn his philosophy, and to consider its rules of judgment as the result of either puerility or hypocrisy. Naomi, in a moment of severe reflection, was horrified to find that she actually took pleasure in such conversation as this,—that it amused and excited her. But she had got amongst what might be called a sect, and which seemed to think merely of passing time agreeably and friendly, carefully shunning the business and active ambition of life as beneath their high spirits and independent positions. She had fled to them, indeed, from the class of actively industrious and ambitious, as to a superior sphere, and to minds more elevated and generous. She was mortified at being compelled to suspect that she had got into a region of purer selfishness and nullity, where was nought that was worthy or great to elevate, to occupy, or to purify the mind.

She had learned to look up to it, however, and she found it fascinating. Naomi, of course, went to court. One of the *calicols* introduced her, and it was great honour to be so introduced. There is not a more striking

scene in the world. There crowds of the proudest, noblest, most independent people in the world come to do humble homage to the shrine,—not of power, for the sovereign has none to hurt them ; not of greed or of ambition, for it forms no part of the habits or occupation of the sovereign to advance them. The crown bestows no forfeited estates, no monopolies, no wealth, no commands, no places, no position, no dignity even. For the addition of a ball, or a strawberry leaf, to a coronet, or the appending of an order or a garter, is a grave matter for ministerial rather than royal consideration. Yet royalty is worshipped in this country, not for what it does or can do, but for what it expresses or represents. And so little does sentiment depend upon reality, that the baron did not kneel to kiss the hand of either of the redoubtable Tudor queens with more respect and love, than a courtier of the present day passes before the throne, and humbles himself before its glance, marking carefully whether that glance be speak indifference, indicating disesteem.

What a country is England, in which

Joseph Hume takes care to present himself at court, and to bask in his sovereign's smile for approbation of his patriotic care of the national purse. Mr. Hume is said to be more hurt and inconsolable at royalty's not recognising him on such occasions, than the most gilded of the sticks that wait behind the throne. Be it said, too, in honour of the veteran Joseph; a man as loyal as he is radical, although the ignorant *cælicolæ* would class him with Danton or Robespierre.

Naomi had grave recognition from Charles Delmer, cordial salutation from Lord Poyntz, reproaches from Lady Louisa Merton. Jacobi asked her for tidings from Olympus.

Naomi would not admit that she had been exploring any lofty or exclusive region. She had found it impossible to enter the London world except on the condition of giving up all liberty and free will for a time. Had she made a mistake?

Quite the contrary. She had selected the right initiation. "I should give a fortune myself," said Jacobi, "to learn the mysteries."

"I know of none."

"It is said, you take out your heart, and

place it on an altar to burn, till it is reduced to a cinder ; and then you are free to enter the temple."

" You have been reading Vathek, and are confounding what you please to call Olympus with the Hall of Eblis ; only that the burning heart, which there terminates the story, you take and place at the beginning. Why can you not allow a woman to carry heart with her into the pleasures of gay society, as a man often does into the pursuit of politics ?"

" I don't allow men any such liberty," said Jacobi, " nor women either. For what makes the charm and the household god of private life, becomes the torment and the demon of those who make it a pleasure or a business to live with the cold, the jealous, and the hostile."

" In order to be entitled to have a heart, then, one must stop at home to sew and make puddings."

" It is not necessary to descend lower," said Jacobi, " than the intellectual, the active, the moral, and the industrious."

" That is what Baron Fascine calls the chapman class of life, where people bend over counters and hang over desks, and think

themselves virtuous when they are overworked."

"Is it Miss Worksworth that I hear?"

"I do but repeat what I heard,"

"But adopting the tone and the philosophy as your own."

"No, I assure you."

"Well, I'll put you to the proof, by asking which is the object of most interest, Charles Delmer there, bent under his thoughts, or Lord Thesaurus next him, with the weight of his money-bags upon his shoulders?"

Naomi replied "that Mr. Delmer's looks certainly awoke anxieties for his health, which no aspect of Lord Thesaurus could awaken, except in his heir."

In a few moments Miss Worksworth had been introduced and passed before the glance of royalty, trembling before, confused the while, but terribly agitated after. It was nervous error, perhaps, an exaggeration or distortion of the vision, or direct interference of the imagination with reality. But, founded or unfounded, there remained indelibly upon Naomi's mind the impression that the royal countenance did not express that benignity usually directed upon a young girl at such a

moment, at least, when it was not one of formal notice or indifference. She had strength of mind to set the idea aside as impossible, considering her obscurity, her innocence, her good intentions, her newness to the world. But the impression returned, would not be pooh-poohed out of existence. What had she done, what incurred? The daughter of mere mercantile wealth, she had certainly thrust herself, or allowed herself to be thrust, into a class that prided itself on exclusiveness. The mere circumstance, though the result as much of chance as premeditation, more of curiosity than vanity, and more of light-heartedness than ambition, told against her, she admitted, especially when the members of humble spheres seemed neglected and thrown off. Conscience answered, she had slighted none; and that if she had cooled and wavered, ample time and occasion for both had been allowed her. But what were such imputations as these, made concerning a person so humble, in the ear of royalty? Too insignificant to obtain attention. Her personal friends and associates might not be of the most disinterested and pure,—were not those to whom such a being as Naomi ought to have been attracted. But

then they were the queens of fashion, and she honoured them not as her own selection, but as society's award.

This little circumstance, real or imagined, sunk deep into Naomi's mind, although smothered for the present by compliments, well-merited, on her dress and beauty, and by the preparations for the first court ball she had attended, and at which she appeared as the beauty, as the heiress of the many thousands, and the adopted daughter of the *cœlicolæ*, who had never been known to make such an exception as they did in her person. In short, Naomi was in the seventh heaven of social pre-eminence and delight, surrounded by homage, too varied to enumerate or to scan, with a present full of triumph, pleasure, and excitement, and a whole horizon full of prospects of all kinds, merely dependent, at least apparently so, on her choice or mind.

In the *furor* of triumph and exultation the season drew to a close; and Naomi, instead of retiring to her rural mansion, seeking her man of business, and examining into his affairs, agreed to a trip to Paris, in order to take a survey of that pleasurable land in the company of her new friends.

CHAPTER V.

HERE were some months during the late
troubled years of French revolution, when all
which remains of the upper class of society in
that country had no bad grounds for hoping
that their turn was at length come. People
were sick of a republic, hopeless of the Orleans,
distrustful of a Bonaparte. The clergy were
prepared to rally to a legitimate prince. The
reactionists, trodden underfoot, were in-
clined to welcome any power that would
drive them off those who, in the name of the
public, had placed their boot-heel on the
neck of democracy. The name of the Duke
of Bordeaux was in every mouth, and was for
a moment so popular, that had the Prince
appeared at the time, and shown himself
wise, adroit, successful, he would have carried
his way by acclamation, more easily and

enthusiastically than the lucky prince who took his place, has since done ; and who at that time was perhaps not unprepared to hear in and join the legitimist cry. The jubilation of the royalists, after twenty years of extinction, may be imagined ; they had not insisted on their prince being immediately elected, had thought it safer that so innocuous and disinterested an individual as Louis Napoleon should be elected to the first place, in order to keep the seat warm for the legitimate heir. This was the arrangement ; and with this arrangement the old noblesse were delighted and hopeful ; so much so, that they opened their saloons for the first time for twenty years, gave fêtes and banquets, flattered Imperialist officers, treated Louis Napoleon their *protégé*, and thronged all blazing with jewels to the halls of the Elysée. It was to witness these *avant scènes* of a royalist restoration, that Naomi was borne to Paris.

How different were the two worlds ! In England, where active occupation and pursuits were open to all, with valuable prizes to be obtained, there the crowds of the wealthy resorted to pleasure, and ingenuity was tasked to invent such pastimes as might find an interest

the idle. In France, where any and every career for the rich and wellborn was hopeless or ludicrous, and where idleness seemed enjoined, there no pleasure existed, no society, no fashion, no turf, no field sports. Some stray individuals did ferret out some little pleasures of their own; one found it in the opera, another at the Jockey Club, a third in gastronomy. But a varied set of occupations and pleasures, arranged through the year, and distributed through life, such as the science of time-killing amply provides for in England, was in France unknown; here were no *cœlicolæ*, no classes separated, at least by education and ideas. All ranks had been educated together; and the sons and daughters of the great and noblest families of the land had received the same instruction, and begun the world with the same ideas, as their fellows destined to launch in professional or industrial life.

It would require volumes to even sketch the numbers who, in that busy and intermingled world, stood up to scrutinize and be scrutinized. Naomi had twenty offers of marriage in a month, chiefly from persons whom she had never seen, but whose advantages and

accomplishments were set forth in what was considered irresistible statements. They were of course food for laughter ; as was indeed the very urgent and apparently heartfelt suit of a young noble, who sent his mother to woo for him. The aim of the timid gallant was not at all obtained, for Naomi could not fall in love with the young gentleman who proposed to her by proxy ; but she did become considerably in love with the proxy, being the matron who came upon what in English eyes appeared so strange an errand.

Miss Worksworth's friends and herself had taken an hotel in the Faubourg St. Germain. The proprietress had retired to a wing of the ample residence ; and she it was, the Princess of Ischia, who undertook so singular an embassy. Daughter of one of the old families of France, but left alone and an orphan by the guillotine and the emigration of her relations, she had married an Imperialist general, who had served Napoleon with devotion to the last musket-shot of 1814, and even acquiesced in Marmont's truce with reluctance. But, having taken the oaths to the Bourbon king, he remained true to them ; refused to follow Napoleon to Waterloo, and served many years, as much respected for

his character as if his birth had allowed him to boast of his ancestors having served Henry the Fourth.

Not rich enough for his rank, the Baron of Ischia had engaged in mining and smelting speculations, which had proved far from successful. One of the sons still endeavoured to make his father's forges pay; but the other day the *ouvriers* turned him out of it, and stated their intention of working it for themselves, on the ground that their labour had been employed long enough in it to entitle them to the larger share of the mine and its establishments. Subsequent events had indeed defeated such schemes of confiscation, but it had not fructified the mine, nor set the Princess above letting her hotel. In such a position where would an Englishwoman be?—buried an hundred fathoms deep in oblivion and neglect. Not so the Princess; she knew all Paris. Her little boudoir had but three chairs beside her own: but they were always full, afternoon and night; visitor after visitor came to occupy them. A kind of caterer for Legitimist and Imperialist conversation, well-allied, respected, trustworthy, acute, agreeable, the Princess of Ischia's boudoir was a

council-chamber, to which all brought tidings, and interchanged them,—where all sought counsel and countenance, and where men came to light that little precious lamp of discernment which serves to direct them through a darker world.

Naomi soon came to prefer Madame d'Ischia's closet to any other larger, more splendid, or more thronged place of society, where she found herself singularly misplaced. In England there is no very marked difference between the treatment of girls and women in society: abroad there is a vast difference. Where Naomi was considered as the one, she found herself neglected and dull; where she was addressed as the other, she found herself the object of homage which she thought coarse, and converse that was beyond her comprehension, and that appeared to her better uncomprehended.

Amongst those who at times took one of the three chairs of Madame d'Ischia was Louis Napoleon,—then with something left of florid, frank English life about him,—colour and qualities that have since degenerated into the pale-yellow hue, and false cold demeanour of a genuine autocrat. He was then full of pro-

uses; and Madame d'Ischia believed in his good intentions. "But as all the world is laying him false," said she, "and as he is quite shrewd enough to perceive it, he will end by playing all the world as false, and with success too; for he is adroit, bold, and as precisely those rights and claims *qu'on ne peut valoir avec du courage*. After all, in these times, it is not the kind of pretensions one may have, which weigh with the judges; it is the mode of urging the cause."

"And is all the exultation of the Legitimist oblesse at present a thing without foundation or hope?"

"Without either. Envy and hatred, in modern times, are far stronger than attachment. We have no class in France which will bear the elevation of a champion or representative of another class. The Duke of Bordeaux representing the old aristocracy,—the middle and lower classes will unite to defeat him. The Orleans princes represent the middle class,—upper and lower will unite to appoint them. A real lower-class representative would be equally defeated by the intrigues and manœuvres of those above them. Now, Louis Napoleon represents nothing,—

neither mob, bourgeois, nor noblesse. All can hope from him more than they fear. There is all the charm of the ambiguous and portentous about what he may do, or whom he may favour. He represents the *inconnu*, and will therefore be preferred. I am told, the Americans elect their Presidents on this principle; and universal suffrage has no doubt the same result in all countries,—the effect of envy, more than of admiration.”

“How you do lower poor human nature,” said Naomi. “We have one or two cynics in England; but here you are all in that vein.”

“You must take care,” said Madame d’Ischia, “for the word *cynisme* is here considered the most grave affront or reproach that can be dealt. Neither is it deserved: for although the country is so unfortunate,—so much at the mercy of its own ignorance and disunion,—there never was time or country that produced a greater number of honest, principled, uncovetous, and enthusiastic men. These very legitimists,—represented so often as a dull, a corrupt, a sensual aristocracy,—are glowing with genius, and with a far more ardent desire to serve their country than aggrandize themselves. Hence Falloux, hence Montalembert,

the saints of the party who would regenerate France by religion,—or the political heads, like the Duc de Noailles, who would work the remedy by the federal principle, and by the establishment of local and provincial freedom,—Larochejaquelin, with his own noble and liberal ideas,—all these men are Quixotes more than cynics. The Republicans and Socialists have men able as talented, and able as sincere; and though there are some political *roués* amongst the Constitutionals, the number of honest, zealous, straightforward characters amongst them far out-balance all others. It is not true that the great mass of a people are all virtue, and professional politicians all knaves; the very contrary may happen, and politicians may be virtuous martyrs, whilst the great mass of the public in their feelings and acts are traitors to liberty, false to worth, mean, envious, cowardly, and servile. This strikes me to be the case at present in France; and I shall certainly never hereafter hear the word ‘people’ uttered, without a feeling of contempt and disgust.”

Had Naomi had the advantage of a conversation with Michelet or Lamennais, she would have heard precisely the same opinions

expressed of the wealthier and political as she now heard of the popular, and the non-political one. And in truth between them, of ideas and arguments, murderous warfare is not actively formed the great characteristic of the and its present age. They resemble the heel and the serpent's head, which crush and sting each other.

"Do you know," continued M d'Ischia, "that your reproach of *cynisme* I cannot get over, is much more applicable to your own countrymen than to mine. They who seem to have no faith. Fall out of one, or indeed two religious sects that would regenerate the country, and sedate its great worldly philosophy and reawakening religious enthusiasm. But political and social reformers and enthusiasts have none. No one seems to have a way beyond tiding over the difficulties of the day. You never grapple with an evil till it threatens to overwhelm you, and seem to turn every day and every care over to posterity. You do not have a popular enthusiast, nor an aristocratic one. Mind seems to be no part of your being or your concerns.

eloquence is as terse as arithmetic, and your statesmanship algebra. Your debates are like the quarrels of Salvator's banditti, all about the division of a spoil."

"Nay," said Naomi, "if questions of taxation and price have prevailed of late, great moral questions, such as those of slavery, religion, education, have ever been foremost with our thinking and benevolent nation."

"How can a nation be called a thinking one, of which the educated classes worship mere birth and empty fashion?"

"You are yourself an example, Madame La Princesse, that mind and ability are required along with rank and wealth to make a social position and head a social influence. Satirists call the frivolity of fashion what is really an award of superiority, in proportion to intelligence and to the social powers."

"And Baron Fascine, who is not tolerated here, leads it with you?"

"He has solid claims to his influence, though he never puts forward other than frivolous ones. Then he has the art of amusing without these. Besides, without any close analysis of his merits, we always take it for granted, that when men in

society use an influence, and command success, whether a Rothschild or a Fascine, there must be intellect to have won and managed it."

"So that pre-eminence won in fashion is a mark of talent. I will not speak of what I do not know. Your fashionable and idle class, who live for pleasure and excitement, may be very worthy, virtuous, and reverent; but I should recommend you to avoid that class of people here. They are good for nothing, and capable of anything."

This advice was given in a tone more than usually solemn and emphatic, so much so as to puzzle Naomi exceedingly. But as the Princess of Ischia made her sons *industriels*, and gave them not fortunes to live on, but interests to tend and fructify, she deemed such warnings to be the result of the Princess's prejudices against the merely idle. I have seen a great many foreigners, thought Naomi, I should like to see a few types. By *types* she meant good specimens of their class. She desired to know a large landed proprietor, a man of great territorial wealth and influence. She desired also to be introduced to a large manufacturing proprietor. And if she could see the families, the society and habits of

ach, with an inkling of the ideas in which
ey lived, she considered that her sojourn in
rance would turn to better account, than if
pent in the mere seeing of sights and dress-
ing for fêtes. In these voyages of discovery,
Miss Worksworth parted company with the
ountess of —, who was quite happy and
ally occupied in the mazes of diplomatic life,
midst the veterans and the dowagers who
reside over those oracles, and the mustachioed
youths who formed the band of *attachés*, and
whose duty it was to copy all day and waltz
all night.

Miss Worksworth, with all her curiosity
and zeal, found not what she sought. There
were no great landed proprietors; a gentleman
possessed of a certain number of farms, feared
to add to them, and shrunk from increasing
the number of his agricultural holdings and
dependents, lest he should excite envy and be
considered an aristocrat in the district. He
purchased freely, perhaps, in mines, sinking his
money where it might produce, yet not show.
So that there was a large proprietorial interest,
but not a large landlord interest.

As to an extensive manufacturing interest,
there was one man having a large factory property,

and employing with his capital great numbers of workmen in the same district and at the same business, it was not to be thought of; a French capitalist would shrink from it, as much as a Turk from setting up a gilt coach and six: the latter would bring down upon him a visit from the Sultan's mutes; the former would be as much afraid of provoking the envy or rapacity of that still more absolute, more capricious, and more envious sovereign, a democratic public.

Naomi had thought that every country was like England: that the possession of riches was everywhere equally natural and equally secure. She was surprised to learn that England is almost the only place, as it is the only government, in the world or in history, in which great wealth might be enjoyed with all its privileges and none of its perils. The truth of this made her tremble; not for herself, but for a country so happily but so exceptionably situated. Wealth in America, idle wealth, she learned was still more inviolable in the United States than even in France.

"I should have thought," said Madame d'Ischia, "that one of your age and sex would

have been more curious about whether the French made good husbands, and what was their manner of domestic life, than such inquiries as these."

"I assure you," said Naomi, "in all sincerity, that a husband is last and least what I think of."

"Then you have been disappointed?"

"In my general views, yes; but I assure you, dear friend, not in any particular instance."

"Your indifference is unnatural; and here you own we should make a settlement for you without consulting you."

Naomi smiled with considerable determination, and some contempt.

"Nay," said Madame d'Ischia, "are you sure this is not what your friends are doing at this very moment?"

The blood rushed to Naomi's cheek at the suggestion, not merely that her indignation rose against it, but that it awakened and turned her attention to certain hints which she received, certain manœuvres which she had perceived, and a certain tone, used by these fashionable friends, which she had not comprehended.

"Recollect you are not in England," said Madame d'Ischia, "where life, honour, and property are in the law's keeping. Here, and everywhere out of England, they are in your own guard. Persons that move in your upper circle, or any circle, do not commit great *attentats*: your dukes do not strangle their wives, or steal their jewels; robbery is committed with great precaution; you don't get rid of your friends by poison, nor win your mistresses by violence."

"How you alarm me. French life surely is not what Sue writes, or Dumas imagines."

"You are going to the Château de Cantarac," said the Princess.

"How know you that? We have not spoken of it; and I was enjoined not to do so till the visit was certain."

"You are going to the Château de Cantarac," repeated the Princess; "allow me to present you with a talisman for your good, and your preservation in this wild country."

And the Princess d'Ischia gave to Miss Worksworth a handsome gold and inlaid cross. Naomi smiled at the pious gift, and repeated her smile as the Princess entreated her not to throw it into the casket, but to

wear it constantly for her sake and in her remembrance. *Si elle ne porte pas bonheur, c'est un ami à qui une femme peut avoir recours.*

"Little Catholic, as I may be," thought Naomi, "a cross cannot do harm, though I have no need of recurring to any bit of jewelry as a friend, or as a symbol, when the wide world around us is discovered by our instinct or imagination to be peopled." So saying, she examined the cross as she laid it on her table, and was not a little startled to find that she had mistaken the nature of the Princess's pious gift; for, on compressing the upper part, the lower fell off as a sheath, and left displayed to Naomi a very bright, stout, and, though small, a serviceable poniard.

No incident of her short-lived French experience more astonished her. But she and her friends had been anxious to see something of the French provinces, as well as the capital. Although both had been fearfully disturbed, the arm of the soldiery, and of the Government which held and directed it, had not only dissipated every semblance of disorder, but had taken the perpetrators in a net, and without the formality of trial, had packed them all clean out of the country. There was no more

danger then, she was told, in visiting the château of the Duc de Canterac in the Bourbonnais, than a drive round the Bois de Boulogne on any of its frequented days.

To the château of Baron Fascine's friend and relative, the Duke of Canterac, the English party did therefore in good time repair. France is a land of most lovely spots; but as a whole, or viewed in any vast expanse of its few countries are more dreary and uninviting. Indeed, after passing the Seine at Orleans and proceeding to traverse the interminable and slightly varied plains beyond, Naomi felt as if she was embarking upon an ocean, and divested of human comfort, and rare of human habitations, were these dreary steppes. Even where the plain rises into hills, as in the Bourbonnais, and where from the top of some rounded mount, to which the horses have arrived after an ascent of hours, the whole province almost is discerned for leagues, the monotony is scarcely less, so meagre is the outline, so unvaried the landscape.

There are pretty nooks, however, even in the Bourbonnais. In one of its southern vales on the banks of a torrent, and with hills well covered with firs, stood the château of Canterac.

commanding a distant view of the magnificent mountains of Auvergne ; the most powerful of Dollond's telescopes could not, however, have descried another château within range. Such gentry as lived in the province had located themselves in the towns, where they vegetated, their sons and grandsons, more uncertain how to keep afloat and earn their bread than the peasants, from whom they were scarcely distinguished. There is no more uneasy class in France than the sons of the old gentry in rural provinces, which are thus in every respect a mere peasant world.

Canterac, therefore, drew no resources in the way of society from its rural vicinage. Its great resource was its being no very distant drive to Vichy, where all who have maladies proceeding from the secretion of too much sour and too much sweet, are sure to find a specific. In one or other of the baths scattered here between the mountains of the Vosges and those of Auvergne, French age is accustomed to renovate itself, to defy gout, and go through a regenerating process between the dissipations or occupations of successive winters.

The Duke of Canterac himself was an in-

valid, and could not exist without Vichy; his existence was made up of its carbonates. The Countess —— had been recommended to try them; but she avoided any allusion to her health, and was such a diplomatist in everything that the tasting of the waters uncovered a pleasurable visit to Canterac, pleased her. Amongst the company at Vichy, but who made Canterac itself his sojourn, was the Comte St. Benoît, another friend of Fascine's, though of a very different character and temper. He was equally handsome of face and figure; was grave, solemn, and almost frigid in appearance. He had that mobility of bright eyes, and immobility of bronze features, which mark the Southern. He was a man *à grands sentimens*; had the reputation of being inspired, and felt great passions. He altogether avoided the gay badinage or universal banter of Fascine. It would seem as if he worshipped women, and respected them much too much to play with them. In short, M. St. Benoît was a hero, such as are only read of in old romances, and who are quite out of date. Every one spoke respectfully, and lovingly, of the Count. The women found him irreprehensible. He was a Legitimist.

had been an equerry to the Duchess d'Angoulême, and seemed to have borrowed the Duchess's grave and haughty demeanour. He had served, sufficiently to give him knowledge and rank, but in 1830 had flung up his commission. He was looked to in case of a *coup de main*; or if the Prince wanted a daring head and a firm hand, he was the *homme d'action* of the party.

It was expected that M. de St. Benoît would make a great impression upon Naomi; for she too was set down as a lady à *grands sentimens*, who had found nothing sublime enough for her. Whether this was the case or not, she could never have looked for such in any foreigner, who in intimate and everyday matters, as well as in heart, must remain a being of quite another species to an Englishwoman, who should undergo transformation in order to become a continental wife. Without disparagement for Count, Duke, or Baron, she would as soon have thought of entering a nunnery, as doing the outlandish act of marrying them. And although the Countess said, that high life bridged over the Channel—left no difference between foreigners and English at a certain altitude—Naomi could

not understand such doctrines. There was a tacit freemasonry of life between compatriots, which would require years for two—even lovers—of different nations to learn. That she could therefore do more than laugh at Fascine's humours, or coldly admire St. Benoît's stateliness, was a great mistake on the part of the *cœlicolæ*.

St. Benoît, nevertheless, made his advances in due form. And a very intelligent companion and superior guide he proved in these unexplored regions of central France. Nor could she avoid agreeing in many of his social views. She looked in vain for the great good that a revolution, sweeping away all the upper classes, was said to have done; for she never saw a poorer or more destitute peasant class than she found in the Bourbonnais and Auvergne.

"The poor little proprietors of Eastern France, in truth," said St. Benoît, "are miserable. They starve themselves to exist on the little bit of ground they have, and suffer the horrors of hunger and destitution which belongs to the lowest class, whilst they join to them the worst pangs of the class above them, by being at the same time in debt, and

a fear of seeing their little mort-
sold by their creditors, who are
poor as themselves." And St.
on to show that a monopoly of
hands of aristocratic landlords,
ly rational, natural, and happy
anizing a country.

as not skilled enough to answer
by the truth, that land, and the
the land, no matter under what
in what grade, are always mise-
they come to have the use and the
of other capital and wealth than
f produces. A peasantry under the
f birth is poor, but not unhappy ;
under the aristocracy of wealth is
appy ; but the peasantry which
g the state of transition between
other masters, are, we are sorry
er comfortable nor happy. And
peasant, in most of the provinces,
adition.

Benoît, therefore, spoke of put-
ne social clock, like Mr. or Lord
mi did not dispute. Anything
han the *red* doctrine, which was
destitution of peasant and artizan

by the appropriation and subjugation ~~of~~ and of the class that amassed and ~~possessed~~ it. She was therefore as royalist as any ~~of~~ ^{of} celestials could require. But for ~~all~~ ^{all} ~~that~~ she was not in love with those odds and ends and tatters of humanity, which consider themselves to represent the ancient noblesse in France. Naomi could but smile at their hopes, and commiserate their state. As to uniting her fortune with them, or one of them, she could not have dreamed of it; and yet the *cœlicolæ* thought the idea seemed highly flattering to her vanity.

That, however, which they took for vanity was rather curiosity. She had been eager to see, taste, and test that kind of life, over which a veil had been drawn, and within which kind of social divinity was said to be enshrined. She had procured admission as votary, and seen quite enough to feel that was neither the good nor harm which exaggeration represented. It suited those born to it, but would certainly not repay any one climbing to. She was weary of its insipidity, its heartlessness, its voidness of aim, its unsuitableness to her origin and position. She longed for the old mixed society of the

ctual and the professional, the struggling
l with the prosperous, the industrial with
idle. She longed for the converse of
le engaged in the real struggles, and
ated by the common cares of life. She
been too cold to Charles, though he
rved it ; too *nonchalant* of Lord Poyntz ;
neglectful of such old friends as George
nsey. What could have induced her to
ke her native element ? It had not been
: vanity or pride, but curiosity—Eve's
g. But that was satisfied ; and she
d for an opportunity to quietly descend
adder, up which she had mounted with
efforts and such expectations.

e was soon given, or at least she seized,
portunity for obeying this impulse. The
tions of Count St. Benoît—his more than
tions—had become importunate : they
met with no encouragement, and with
ress that increased in proportion to their
ncy. But this in no way abated either
retensions or the impudence of the man.
signified to her friends her intention
ving the Château de Canterac. They
ed their intention of all departing in a
days, and taking the way of the Rhine

home; but as M. de St. Benoît would probably be of the party, Miss Worksworth a more direct road of return.

One morning Naomi came to the breakfast-table paler than usual, her calmness notwithstanding; by at least the signs of past agitation. She had received letters from England, that declared her immediate return indispensable. She declared that she could manage it without depriving Mrs. Rushout of the pleasure of continuing her trip. She had a more plausible explanation with the Countess of — affected to make light of what occurred to Naomi such agitation; the only answer from Miss Worksworth to which was one of concentrated and ill-expressed indignation. The equanimity of other visitors was, however, not disturbed; for whatever had been the cause of Naomi's annoyance, she kept it a secret, whilst she hastened her departure.

As to the Count de St. Benoît, he spared the outward expression of his anxiety and regrets by *la fièvre*, which was announced to have taken hold of him, and confined him to his bed. A Vichy physician was sent for, and Fascine announced his friend's pulse to

some enormous number of pulsations in a minute.

took her departure from Canterac, adieu to her new friends, and soon met herself once more in Madame d'Ischia's *salon*.

did she like provincial France?"

Naomi's look of lukewarm approbation,

"You should have gone to rich and fertile districts,—to the wine countries, to the olive and the vine,—or to the south, where is a rich soil, a comfortable peasant, and a squirearchy not to be despised."

Madame d'Ischia did not ask Naomi of her likes and friends, nor did Naomi volunteer remarks respecting them. But in a few minutes the Princess paid to Naomi's room,

what had become of her parting gift, Naomi coloured. She had not lost it, it was in yon leathern case. The Princess, with singular curiosity, went for it; finding the case, took it up. Naomi's movement to prevent her, but stopped, would be too late. The Princess took, and bared the little pogniard. The polished steel was no longer bright, the scuff which dimmed it was recent

enough to betray at once to the inquisitive maker of the gift, that the brightness of the blade had been dimmed in blood.

"You have used my talisman!" exclaimed the Princess.

"Throw it, for God's sake, into the leather case!" exclaimed Naomi, almost fainting, "and close that case upon it, and upon my French experience."

A very few days after, Miss Worksworth was at Highfield's.

CHAPTER VI.

SINCE Miss Worksworth had withdrawn her attention and interest from the world of public ambition, and the persons who struggled here, changes and losses had taken place. Sir Robert Peel, in the full triumph of his ideas, and the re-knitting of his power, had, with melancholy suddenness, been withdrawn from politics and from life. There were few who heard of that sad event without ejaculating, that it gave a new lease of power to his great rival, and promised to leave the existing chief of the Whigs for a long time lord of the political ascendant. But the Whig boat is a craft whose fate it seems to be to founder in a storm, whilst the stir and danger of a tempest sent it often but the more triumphant over the waves.

If there had formerly been a murmur and hidden censure against the Premier for his Liberalism, there then was more serious mal-

contentism against him in regular course of ferment, not for his liberalism, but for what was construed to be the contrary. As an Englishman and a domestic politician, no one had done more for the Roman Catholics, as for every species of Dissent, than the Whig minister. But, with all this, he had the traditions of his house and of his party, as well the great lesson of English history, to make him dread the formation of an exclusively Papal party in the country. He, who had ever viewed Catholicism with benignity, if not sympathy—seeing it but oppressed—now beheld it, after the suppression of the popular attempts at recovering liberty in different countries, borne on by the tide of despotic and military reaction, with which it allied, until Popery, not merely religious, but political Popery, had reconquered in two years what it had required as many centuries to tear from it. Not merely in Rome and Italy had it recovered its old spiritual and temporal dominion, but even in France and Austria, where it had been kept under by the sense of freedom, and the spirit of secular improvement, it had carried as it were by storm all its ancient fortresses—Church appointments, nun-

neries, wealth, public education, power over the press. It was the fifteenth century bursting back from forth the floodgates of the past to overwhelm the nineteenth. Against this tide the Premier thought he might, like Canute on the sea-shore, cry out to it to stop, deeming the national voice would add efficacy to his words. Lord John, therefore, took his stand on Windsor Keep, and holla'd to the episcopal tide of popery to roll back its advancing wave. When Lord Tiverton heard what his friend and principal had done and uttered, he ejaculated, "I wish he had slept on it!" But if a statesman sleeps upon all that he has to say, he may be sure that he will never say it, and the small remains of frankness and honesty still visible in politics will disappear from them. Nevertheless, one frank and honest word from the lips of the politician who held the first place in England, whose principles were irrefragable and every day more triumphant—that one frank and honest word ruined him. For, though nine-tenths of the great and generous and enlightened public were with him, these approvers were a passive quiet multitude, whilst the one-tenth that were behind, in their malignant

nature, were active, powerful, and influential in their malignity—thanks to the peculiar excellence of the representative system—which, by often giving a casting vote to a knot of the most worthless and unprincipled of men, makes them for the nonce the masters of the honest and generous.

The blunder of the Whig chief was, however, *exploité*, as the French say, by one of the most formidable personages of the day. There were few men who ever came into the world better endowed than Sir Everard Grimstone. Of an old family, a good estate, noble person, and captivating address, he possessed with these all the talents that might have dispensed with them. His talents might have slumbered, and been overgrown in the lazy bed of squire-dom, had not the common embarrassments of that state made him a malcontent. And it bespoke his unscrupulous character, that, when thus turning his attention to public life, in a career that something might be made of, he recommended the sponging off or reduction of a considerable portion of that debt, for which the land and property of the country is mortgaged to its industrious and moneyed class. To the honour, be it said, of the “old English

gentlemen," they have never relished such dishonest advice. And so Sir Everard turned against them, and took up that only theme in which the Tories of the day were vulnerable, viz. extravagance and economy. The virulent preachment of this great household virtue in politics introduced him into the ranks of the Reformers, and the sturdy baronet soon went farther than any of them. Sir Everard, however, was not of the nature of the hunter, who can run from morn till night after the chase, with unabated and unswerving speed. His nature was rather that of the race-horse, that enters for a heat, and runs it with desperate and successful vigour; after it relaxing sinews, till they are strained for another prize, another time, and perhaps another master. Soon the liberals split, some believing in the continued and headlong flow of the popular tide, and anxious to get rid of all who would not sweep along with it, and head it, whilst others more shrewdly believed that reaction and the turn of ebb was nigh. Sir Everard was of the latter opinion, and took the opportunity of some Church questions, for which he cared not a stiver, to shake the Whig dust from his shoes, and the Whig livery from his back;

and with the passionate Lord Knowsley left the Cabinet in a huff.

Though a bold man in a crowd, and a telling combatant in a *mêlée*, Sir Everard was a great coward in solitude. He had not the courage to act principal, and preferred being bottle-holder—a *judicious* one he was no doubt qualified to be. But he required that his principal should resign himself into his hands, as completely as Faust into those of Mephistopheles, and put full trust in his wisdom, and his perfect endowment with the power of the cloven foot. Sir Everard thought he had found a Faust completely to his mind in Lord Knowsley, as a man of rank and learning in politics, a great name, a great intellect, when forced to exertion, and a great debater at a push; a man well placed from his precedents, position, and character, to take a middle place, and rally a large middle party.

Lord Knowsley, however, was not the man that Sir Everard took him for. He was, indeed, a politician who started off in a direction at right angles with his previous course; but once he had taken the start, he kept the line, and scorned to zigzag back to the point which he had quitted. His hot and passionate

temper, on the contrary, urged him on, on. This had driven him to the verge of Radicalism at first, but finding that in that career he ran each day more risk to *s'encanailler*, he turned, as we said, at right angles, and went with equal vehemence in a new direction. In vain did Sir Everard pull him by the skirts—in vain whisper to him, that, however he might turn Tory on religious and constitutional questions, the great material ones would certainly be carried in a popular sense. Lord Knowsley heeded not; and Sir Everard, a wise Achates, sought out a more prudent Æneas.

He found one in Peel. Peel was a man whose confidence no man had ever acquired; nor, indeed, would Peel have given his confidence to any man. But Sir Everard walked into it and took it. 'Twas doubtful, indeed, that Peel would ever have provoked his great party, or broken with them on a vital question of fiscality, and after having once affronted them on a vital question of Church policy, if Sir Everard had not been there, whispering that a party was like a mistress, who having forgiven one offence, would forgive two. At all events it was Sir Everard's maxim, popu-

larity would overcome everything, even the old prejudices and demarcations of party. Peel himself had a surer instinct. He knew he should not be forgiven; knew that he could do the deed, that it would work great good, and save the country from convulsion, by removing, in a most troublous century, from the people altogether that one great incentive to revolution—famine. He saw too many good reasons for what he was doing, not to persist in doing it; but he was amazed at the opposition he met, fretted at the personal depreciation he foresaw, and he wreaked his spleen on all around him; on none more than upon Achates, or Mephistopheles Grimstone, choose the appellation as one will. It is said that, on one occasion, Grimstone complained to his guardian friend, Lord Knowsley, of the tyrannical temper of his new friend Peel, and that he bewailed, with almost tears, his suffering. This drew neither pity nor encouragement from Lord Knowsley, who, instead of consoling or encouraging his would-be penitent, marked his air and remembered his words, in order to amuse his ultra friends with humourous mimicry of Grimstone's lamentation. Sir Everard might have forgiven

the slight, but he never could pardon the joke.

The great point was achieved, however; and the ruin followed—a ruin and discomfiture which, like that of every novel's hero, was expected to turn out a lasting glory and ascendancy. But Peel fell the victim of an accident, and so Sir Everard had, politically speaking, the world to begin over again. He was, indeed, nothing daunted. No one but the Duke of Armington could dispute with him the possession of Peel's mantle, and it was ample enough to be shared. It was cakes and ale to both these politicians, when the Whig chief flung the gauntlet to the Ultramontane Romanists. They counted a large number of noses and voices in the Commons, numbers likely to be multiplied on an election. By hoisting the flag of acquiescence in all that the Pope's agents might do, these votes might be secured. Then the radicals might be won over. The Whig chief was eager to do everything for them, nothing by them. He could not admit into his cabinet men with whose views and tempers he might disagree; whereas Sir Everard Grimstone thought and declared that the cabinet might be formed

on the *table d'hôte* principle. It mattered little how people were got together, provided they agreed when they did meet. And agree they could not fail to do, when the good things of office were placed before them to enjoy, and to *deguster*. The body of the Whigs were asked to join in the joint-stock scheme of administration, and it was only required of them to decapitate their party, and get rid of its heads. Sir Everard promised to take the rising talent of the party, and, in his distribution of office, to pay more regard to that than to rank or family influence. His scheme had, in fact, much that was plausible and good.

The great difficulty in the way of its completion was the pride and the compactness of the Whig party, its natural reluctance to sacrifice its chiefs, to play a secondary part, and be taken, in fact, in tow, by a small boat's crew of politicians, who had got a tight craft, and had become skilled in the management of tides and currents. Charles Delmer was applied to, and was promised all that his former chief denied,—a post of business and importance, a seat in the cabinet ensured, in fact, with all its dignity and emoluments. He had little love

chief who had slighted and denied his —could have little love for that galaxy, which left no room for a humble star to shine through them. But he revered the man who had slighted him, was too honest to sacrifice the interests of a great party, and was in that trying and perplexing position so common in political life, where men are called to sacrifice ambition, fortune, and even existence for honour. The public mark the inconsistency in which honour is sacrificed to lucre, and conclusions are drawn from these of the weakness of mere station; the sacrifices of every kind are never seen, and the political dies without epitaph or reward.

Charles had more at stake than fortune. He was not naturally of a strong constitution; but health and strength with him seemed to go hand in hand with more of mental serenity than bodily vigour.

When his spirit was hopeful and his mind at work, no one enjoyed better health than Charles. At such a time his gait and bearing were those of a man with the firmest constitution existence. He was conscious of no weakness of stomach nor chest, as long as the machinery of mind was all right; but when anxiety or disturbance beset that machinery, when

the wheels stopped in despondency, or grew, through half-obstruction, into a fret, then every part of the body started to consciousness, and was found peccant. He had then neither digestion, nor appetite, nor sleep. Physicians explore the pulse, and put their stethoscope to the lungs; but of what importance are these to life and health, compared with the electric current of the mind, that comes fraught either with hope or with despair, with cheerfulness or gloom,—in fact with life or death.

Charles might have been considered sinking to even his sanguine mother's great alarm until Sir Everard, having nearly brought his scheme to maturity, whispered it into the ear of the young and ambitious man. Even although he was far from jumping at such offers, they excited him, banished in a trice every trace of that *maladie de langueur*, which had made him prefer his easy chair to his horse, and filled every muscle not with mere febrile, but with bright and active life. This however, did not preclude fits of despondency, hours of uncertainty, and an amount of self-torment and perplexity painful in the extreme. Charles knew not where to look for counsel

To Jacobi he could not breathe a word. Sagacis declined giving him any opinion whatever. He therefore took the bold resolution of consulting his chief. Meeting him in society, an opportunity offered for the expression of a wish on the part of Charles to have a private conversation with him. There is nothing secret in the great movements of political life, and Charles was fully aware that there was left no secret for him to divulge. But he really wanted honourable counsel.

Every one knows the modest lodge or straggling cottage at the edge of the front of the brow of the hill which commands the beautiful view of the silver Thames, in which so many eminent statesmen have snatched momentary repose in the neighbourhood of their official duties. All is small and humble—house and trees, entrance and enclosure—the avoidance of all that might remind of greatness, having been the sedulous aim of builder and of gardener. Beyond the little fence the royal park stretches in all the magnificence of up and low land, covered with fern and wood forest, deer and herd; but the residence we speak of, being but as an adjunct on the great domain, not lording over it, lies humbly

nestling, to be forgotten as an insignificant part of it. A lover of romance might have peered for beauty amongst its woodbines, but certainly no stranger would have reined his horse up at such a portal in search of dignity and power. Charles penetrated amongst its laurels and rhododendrons.

It was a task of much more difficulty and time to penetrate into the confidence of the tenant of this shrub-covered retreat, a man of sensitive nature, accustomed to be accosted by men who had a design in every word, and latterly surrounded by those who questioned his ascendancy and mooted his fall. But Charles was so frank, so disinterested, so affectionate, and even touching, that it was impossible to doubt the nobleness of his nature.

“ If it be a question of private fortune and ambition with you, Delmer, I must confess to fears that the great Whig party is likely to undergo an eclipse. It is for you to consider how far you are bound to it, and whether the larger denomination of Liberal may not better suit you, and give your usefulness and your ambition fairer scope.”

“ The power and importance of a great

party," said Charles, "chiefly consists in the strength of the band which holds it together. Honour and fidelity have formed the bond of the Whig party; it has never been a mere combination of individuals for the furthering their respective interests. I fear that if the gentlemanly band of honour be exchanged for that of temporary expediency, there will be no more Whigs."

"Would not a combination of Liberals answer the same purpose?"

"I fear not; the great purpose of the present being to offer a compact body, moved by one head, in opposition to the compact body of the landed interest."

"I feel, indeed, that the Liberals will set themselves at a disadvantage by breaking loose from and destroying the old feudal and family links of party, whilst their enemies retain their links and their old compactness. But after all, the political party, which in Parliament represents the intelligent mass of the nation, must be varied and comprehensive. And if Whiggism be too narrow for it, it must undergo reform and transformation."

"Why not make such sentiments known as yours? They would relieve the too general

conviction, that your Lordship personally was the great obstacle to the Whig party's amalgamating with others, to its taking in able colleagues, and servants from either side of you. Pardon me, but have you not, even in the House, spoken the language of exclusiveness, rather than admitted the necessity of comprehensiveness?"

"I have said no more than declared the impossibility of two men with directly adverse views and discordant habits sitting in the same cabinet. I am most ready and willing to advance with the age, and have done more than most men to deprive the aristocracy of unjust and idle privileges; but I cannot go hand in hand with any politician who would set to work, with malice or with wisdom, prepared to Americanize the land. Neither could I summon to a cabinet of my making, men who seek to disarm the country, and to disorganize its military force and fiscal resources."

"Men are driven to start such schemes," said Charles, mildly, "by long and unjust exclusion from office. What more outrageous than hundreds of propositions, both of Whigs and Tories out of office?"

“Radical, you mean, is not more than the men of other parties.”

“Not a whit.”

“Neither do your arguments tend?”

“To induce you, who are so fully aware of the weaknesses and defects of the party, to seek their remedy and reform generally, of either leaving the last to mere uneducated men, or of allowing the party to fall from power altogether, and fall into anarchy and dissolution.”

“What is to be done for the party, Delmer, can be done by me. I cannot cancel long-standing claims, slight respectable talents, take them by the hand to help them into the arms of friends. I have been myself for a long time but a compromise between the aristocracy and the people. My task is to continue this accord as long as I can possibly. But to sacrifice one to the other, the prolongation of personal power or the triumph to myself would be mean and selfish.”

“I cannot acknowledge the justice of your said Charles. “What must be done, I would best do. To prevent the people from reforming Parliament, you reformed the House of Commons. The reform then applied to the legislature,

it is now demanded to apply to its executive. The English cabinet requires reform, and the principle upon which English cabinets are made. This is requisite, were it but to put the government of the country in harmony with the revolution of 1831. I say again, you ought to attempt it."

"I can do but one thing towards the reform you speak of, and that is, to break up the existing machine at the first stoppage of the wheels."

"But this risks the flinging of power altogether away into the hands of those who are the enemies of popular rights and progress, and who might overturn even the great material good so lately won for the people."

"Quite impossible. If the Tories take power, it must be to renounce Toryism; so that if the two great old parties are to expire, our rivals will thus be the first to commit suicide."

"I am comparatively a young man," said Charles, "and yet I cannot hear without emotion the doom pronounced upon the two old parties of English politics and English history."

"Which we learned to revere in youth, and

in which all our men of political genius have been immortalized. I feel it too. But, after all, were not these parties the mere means of advancing personal ambition and continuing class ascendancy? What were we in youth taught most to prize in them? Personal eminence and success. For my own part, and with my present experience, I had rather have carried one great measure of national or popular advancement, than have led both parliament and court for a series of years, like Walpole, without an aim attained or a purpose achieved, save that of personal eminence and aggrandisement."

"Yet to be at the head of the councils of England is scarcely less than to govern the world?"

"The world goes of itself, Delmer; and as to foreign politics, or the world's politics, as you would have them, the only thing wise and profitable is to abstain. I wish I could teach my friend Tiverton so. The days are past for riding whirlwinds and directing storms. As to the glory of standing well at court, and of, at the same time, tricking popular parties, or interesting aristocratic ones to support you, I can see none. I have no

respect for the science of political management and address. It is but clever rope-dancing for the most part after all. It is amongst moralists to condemn the cleverness of the accomplished courtier ; but the conduct of princes does not use half the address and meanness, and dissimulation that is employed by him who pays his court to the people. The vilest of flatterers and the most false of talkers is the American politician of the present. The art of keeping power, the head of power, is thus too often a very mean and inglorious one. I have no ambition to continue longer the repository of aristocratic trust and of popular confidence. I am managing the one and conciliating the other. If the last cannot be achieved by boldness of act and frankness of speech, I should leave it to politicians of the supple and expedient expediency. There are countries in which but eunuchs can hold authority ; and I may rival the East in this respect."

There was enough of bitterness in these expressions of resignation, Charles, that the dissolution of the old order, its being thrust into the shade, or under the yoke—was felt as poignant

ancient chief as by himself, a scarcely recognised son. As far as he himself was concerned, he could not but receive these words as an absolution from the long allegiance which he had been taught to pay to the Whig banner. He was again about to protest, when he was interrupted.

“Set aside questions of party—set aside the claims of men; as to Whig direction, that, I repeat, is no longer of the importance it used to be. No possible ministry can embroil England in a new war; no popish minister, or party, can implicate us in a struggle for or against the monarchic or the republican principle. Tory will not differ materially from Whig, nor Radical from either. The politics of the country progress in a deep track; Whig, Tory, or Radical can do no more than drag these on, each with different trappings, and different colours, but small difference now of either aim or principle. Care is not required for the present, but for the future. There need be no anxiety for the course we take,—that is marked out; but a provident look-out should be kept to fit the country for that state, and those trials, into which she must come. A great fellow-statesman of mine foresaw the

danger of a population like ours narrow its means of subsistence; he obviated danger, and applied the remedy of a material reform. What we now want moral one; we want something done for minds of the people analagous to what has been done for their physical requires. To achieve this would be more useful than to have maintained oneself on the tight-rope of Ministry for a score of years. I had given England a system of popular education than be inscribed in its annals as I governed it for half a century."

Charles could extract no more from the oracle. Indeed, he ought to have been satisfied with what he elicited, and which seemed to answer fully the question upon which he came. No words could more plainly inform him that he was free—that the old democratic party to which Charles had served apprenticeship and taken his oath of allegiance was in a state not merely of disarray, but of dissolution. It had ceased to command, and comprehended, the liberal party, where merely its tendencies and principles were in question, but the capacity of its off

ility of its chiefs, the machinery of its was clogged so as to bring Government to a stand still. Admitting all this, I did not see how it was to be either rated or replaced. A new man of coming genius, with a new question of coming interest, might together rally the behind them, and triumph over the rminess or ill favour of the displaced f old parties. But an old question, ntly decided to excite small interest iety, was the only food for the public whilst every candidate for power was an who might have scars and services d, but who had not a new face nor a lea wherewith to captivate the public

ambition and ability of the malcontents oon put to the proof. The very first at the frowardness or mistrust of the dvanced party showed itself in hostility ;, or abstention from it, the minister d; and Sir Everard was unexpectedly ematurely called upon to fulfil the pro- und redeem the pledges he had given to y, by his concoction of a joint-stock stration, including the youngest blood,

best talents, and most advanced ideas of all parties. No one could be more sanguine or confident of success than Sir Everard himself. He boasted that he could command the services of all that was valuable in the ranks of the Whigs without the incumbrance of the chief; and when this was found impossible, he refused to meet or treat with this chief, except on terms of arrogant equality. Charles blushed at the manifestation of such signal impudence; and, although his fortune was bound up in the proposed arrangement, he was tempted an hundred times to denounce and forswear it, and sacrifice his last chance of ambition to a sense of delicacy and personal reverence. The scheme, however, could not be brought to any successful solution. Even the ingenious combination of half-a-dozen malcontent parties, neutralizing each other, was found to form a bark not sufficiently weather-tight for launching, as the potent, grave, and reverend Whigs had refused either to decapitate themselves, or resign the lead. Irish clamourers were considered not powerful enough to neutralize English dislike of priestcraft and humbug, and Sir Everard was obliged to repocket his ministerial lists, and return to his

portfolio the celebrated programme in which he was to out-do, and out-bid at once all the candidates for popular support and aristocratic confidence.

Poor Charles, who had consented to be of his cabinet, felt signal relief at being released from the necessity; although the bursting of the bubble, and the consequent reaction after excitement, flung him into that malady of languor in which man is threatened with ceasing to live, merely because he has ceased to hope.

CHAPTER VII.

WEALTH was a very simple thing in old times. It was to most as so many jewels heaped in a strong box, and laid by in a secure cellar; or it was a tract of land which slaves ploughed, sowed, or reaped. In modern times wealth is a very different thing; it is no longer the hoarded heap,—for the deepest and largest would soon disappear in exchange for the costly necessities and luxuries of life, unless it were made to fructify; that is, unless the money were sown upon the winds, and reaped from them again. For what is speculation, or industry of any kind, in our day, save sowing something as uncertain and invisible as the wind? How the vast capital on the returns of which modern millionnaires live, is turned, is the greatest miracle and the greatest mystery of the age.

It is not only the mystery, but like the circulation of the blood, it is the life of the system. for it to stop were death—death to the body politic; and for it even to go languidly on is suffering, is syncope, or disease. And yet attention is much more keenly directed to the multitudes who live along this stream of industry in its circulation, than to the sources which supply it, or the spring which sets it in motion. We have herds of philanthropists very busy with the fate and condition of the earner, anxious that he should receive such a portion of the public wealth, that want should not reach, and necessity not drive him to immorality and despair. But for the men and the minds which set the stream in motion, which mobilize and liquefy capital, and disperse it into channels where it wheels round and round, we depend often upon these more than the wealth originally set in motion. We hear little of the monster minds and monster fortunes, which undertake and accomplish this task. And yet it is in the prudence of their speculations, the honesty of their habits, the sanity of their thoughts, that depend the real progress, prosperity, and well-being of the country.

The present, it is to be feared, is not a healthy time, or state, for this important class. When great manufactures and intimate trade brought in their gains and profits, and when the great business and mercantile life was in producing commodities and exchanging them; then industry was regarded as a noble and a moral calling. Then the actual circulation of money was confined to the trade in it was regular, unagitated, unintruded upon by the ignorance or the passions of the public. But now the honest gains of either the merchant or the manufacturer are so scant, that few condescend to attend to or embark in them. Money-lending and manipulation, instead of being considered a disgrace, has become the occupation of the day. Individual establishments for producing goods are few: a hundred modes of employing labour are conducted on the joint-stock principle, in which the actual working and knowledge are delegated to one, or to a few half-interests, whilst the subscribers and shareholders look merely to the price of the share in the market, not to its employ in order to it be fructified. Thus the spirit of speculation

that of industry. Money in the abstract takes the place of all that really constitutes and reproduces value. England has become a nation of stock-jobbers and share-brokers instead of one of private merchants and manufacturers. It is like the land, where all intelligence and interest were confined to the feudal owners, whilst the constant fructification of the rent was left to the clodhopper and the ignorant. If misery, poverty, and disappointment was the result to the owner of land, for whom nature annually produces, what must be the result to the capitalist, against whom nature works to destroy and to oppose, not to restore or to produce? It is frightful to think to what we should awake, if some catastrophe of revolution or convulsion was to strike the national industry, and compel England to realize in any given time the semblance which it boasts, and on which it lives, though they but possess that interchange and repetition of some more original return, frothed and multiplied, but not substantialized by credit.

Naomi had hitherto paid but little attention to her own wealth, the mode of its rearing and keeping, nor yet to the nature and vicis-

situdes of the world of wealth, in which she moved, as the representative of her fortune moved from her. She had looked upon riches but as the means of doing good. All her schemes of this nature had proved futile, and now she returned to the country, after some months of absence, and many of inattention, she found a general flow of prosperity infused through all classes, quite incomprehensible to her. New laws, a new state of things, new possibilities, new chances, had stirred up that mind which takes the initiative in the movement of industry. And the result was, money flowing, the owners of it busy, those who lived by wages employed. Mills were spinning, forges blazing, chimneys smoking. Shuttlefield was far happier than even an election could make it. No one had time for quarrelling. Old Mr. Pevensey had disappeared from the world, and the Duke of Armington had already placed his farm in the hands of a new broom, who had swept it clean. Thaddeus was still in gaol, undergoing imprisonment for the part he was supposed to have taken in the burning of Poyntzstett. And from pity to Rachel, as well as from her own confidence in his innocence, one of the first anxieties

of Miss Worksworth was to obtain his liberation.

But the event most talked of in Shuttlefield and Worksworth, was the forth-stepping of Mr. Plynlimon. He had long since delegated all minor cares in the mills to subordinate agents, and himself been absorbed in the exchanges and places of business of Manchester and Liverpool. He had now purchased a country-seat, which he called Plynlimon Hall. His gig had swollen into a coach; and though sobriety was still observed in his own gait and that of his retainers, it was evident that he was gradually setting out for one of the grandees of the land. There was not much in this that should have startled and surprised Naomi. But she remembered, and had learned from the tradition of her family, that a great fortune, although it might be acquired by the humblest person, still required to have a long life of careful industry devoted to it, in order to its being honestly acquired, and solidly put together. She was not aware how the manipulator of money, the association of it by numbers placing their savings at the disposal of a few, placed in the hands of the fortunate and adroit the means of realizing immense fortunes

in an exceedingly small space of time, such, indeed, as successful and patient industry was seldom wont to achieve in a life-time.

Of course Mr. Plynlimon was one of the first persons, whom Naomi saw on her return to her residence. And his first care was to confess, that Providence had blessed his humble and patient efforts after fortune, by success in present speculations far greater than he had contemplated, or that he deserved. But when Naomi hinted, that the acquirement of such wealth placed him necessarily above attending to the vicarious duties of another property, he seemed not to admit the necessity of abandoning the paternal care, which the late Mr. Worksworth had in a manner bequeathed to him over his daughter. Mr. Plynlimon accompanied this intimation with an expression of face and manner, which recalled similar expressions of his at a former period, and which had suggested then to Naomi the idea, that Mr. Plynlimon was foolish and fatuous enough to pretend to her hand. If the bare approach to such a semblance had called forth indignation and repulsion then, it was now met by that far more cold and crushing response, which many months mingling with

old teaches, to those who have maintained
ion in it.

was not merely in her air, but in her
frame of mind and thought, that this
nce had wrought a change. And in
g was she more changed than in her
of wealth; though anxious to use it for
advantages, she had deemed it the duty
merous nature to despise such for itself.
g it away in affection, or devote it for
interested a feeling, would have been
light. But a position in the world,
as in the world, success in the world,
wn and unimagined then, had now its

She had no way of commanding them
wealth, great wealth; and she fully
d saw the value of that, which she knew
w to prize before, but which placed her
same rank with the high-born and proud
land. She had experienced a great
social mortifications, instead of social
re and excitement. She had the power
ige, though vengeance in her mind was
generous overcoming. She had to
ainst obstacles, surmount rivalry, force
ontempt. She considered herself vilely
eachers treated by the high folk,

who wanted but to make a dupe and a prey of her, and had welcomed her amongst them more to punish and mortify her presumption than really to befriend her.

Her wealth, therefore, for these and other causes, became dear to her. And she resolved to prize and protect it, nor entrust its care to such doubtful friends and ambiguous characters as Mr. Plynlimon. But she felt, more by instinct than actual knowledge, that it might be both difficult and dangerous to extricate a complicated property at once from his management, and that it was advisable to do so gradually, without awakening his resentment, and at the same time, with care to attain all the knowledge respecting her own affairs, which she had formerly been at least very easily put off from inquiring into.

Such very natural change in Naomi's views of material and substantial things, could not well take place without a corresponding revolution of her estimate of the sentimental. If her feelings had grown by a full year in the one, it had advanced ten years in the other. In fact, she could have laughed outright at the generous *penchant* she once entertained for Charles Delmer. His cold, at least, but

reception of it, might indeed cause, rant her to look upon her past sense a childish mistake. But independent her hero-worship had undergone very modifications. She had taken a girlish

life, when she considered that a knight should have achieved his own

She now saw no objection to his inherited it. For, after all, what was all ambition, but an adroit clambering obscurity upon that platform, which the wealth and birth, the sanctioned class, occupied. However she might despise the society she had just left, she not help remaining tinctured with a t for those who began life with mere rning propensities and views. And the case of Charles,—where this position adventurer was not accompanied with of aim, when the hero was not super-spirit to the world up into which he or fancied to climb, he lost all title to all claim to sympathy, as one unjustly of high office and position.

stances, and indeed business, brought n contact with the Duke of Armington, son, now Lord Poyntz. Her first

thought on meeting with his Grace, was to represent the hardship of Thaddeus's imprisonment, his innocence of any premeditated design or violence, and the expediency, as well as generosity, of shortening his period of durance. The Duke declared that he had already, on the demand of Mr. G. Pevensey, exerted himself to obtain the pardon of the prisoner; but that he was thwarted by parties in Shuttlefield, and even magistrates, who represented the young man as highly dangerous. Party and electioneering pique had, no doubt, most to do with it; but it was for Miss Worksworth's Whig friends to pay attention to her representations. Her influence had given them half the representation of the county, and added to their power in the towns. Such influence was not to be thrown away, but made use of, and like other investments, should bring its proper return in gratitude. Naomi felt the reproach, and what is more, felt it to be just. She had frittered away her influence in obedience to one personal predilection or another; and had not made that consistent use of her political influence, which was calculated to secure that importance and energy, which she now began to prize.

Another piece of intelligence that Naomi learned indirectly from the Duke was, that a considerable number of mortgages had been paid off the estate of Poyntzstett, that larger sums had become the less, especially as her agent had seemed anxious for the repayment. The intelligence was given evidently to see whether she was aware of it. Her look at once bespoke that it was quite new to her, although she made no observation whatever, except to express congratulation at hearing that the old seat, and the old family, were shaking off incumbrances, and joining in that prosperous advance enjoyed by all classes of the country.

"So, Poyntz," said his father, "you think our Lady of Milldom infinitely improved by even one campaign of fashion?"

"Undoubtedly so. She seems to have had the taste and skill to cull for herself all the valuable qualities of our fine ladies, without so much that render them dangerous and insupportable, and that in her would be preposterous and absurd."

"She could never keep in that set, however."

"She seems to have shown as much tact

and determination in breaking loose from them, as skill in forcing her way amongst them."

"Did Delmer ever pay his addresses to her?"

"Most certainly, under my own eye. But who has not? She, too, was fascinated with Whiggism, thought a speech for liberty, whether of conscience or of trade, a marvellous piece of heroism. She had learned to worship Fox,—looked upon Tories as recreants."

"How came a young girl to take a political view of life?"

"Having inherited political influence, no doubt, and having it to bestow with her hand."

"How is it, then, she did not fall into the hands of some Puritan cousin?"

"And there is, or was, a Puritan cousin, my grandfather's eye-sore, the present member for Shuttlefield. But she has discerned from the first, all that is vulgar in Radicalism."

"Her London career would incite a strong thirst for distinction. Why has not some hungry and improvident lord made her his prey?"

"She is far above surrendering to any

utterly for the sake of his gilded wings; and I fancy her breach with the celestials, as owing to her stubbornness of will in this respect. Naomi Worksworth—an unfortunate name—is a superior woman. Jacobinite worships her.”

“You seem yourself, Poyntz, much absorbed in the same sentiment.”

“Mine has been an admiration of long-standing, and which certainly has not declined, and the commanding character of the woman is even more charm than the ingenuous simplicity of the girl. But Milldom and its annexion—to be sure she has shaken off the latter, and seeks to be rid of the former; and even she may have predilections, for as I have had no decided court, I have been met by *accueil* equally dubious and free.”

“I have none of the prejudices of rank, indeed. But is the lady as rich as she has the reputation of being? Plynlimon plainly hinted that it was exaggerated, and that much was allowed.”

“I believe Plynlimon to be an arch rogue.”

“What, a saint of his starch!”

“A most unprincipled knave. He certainly told his lady-patroness in the Shuttlefield

election, and was well nigh carrying it for my grandfather, but for threats of exposure of Heaven knows what disgraceful peccadillo by the man who is now in prison, and whom he is most instrumental in keeping there."

"This can be inquired into. But, at all events, it would be wise to learn the sentiments of this powerful lady, in order that, if she has fallen off from the Whigs, and broken loose from Radicals, her influence may be acquired for that combination of parties, in which, Poyntz, we are interested."

"I fear," said Lord Poyntz, "that your Grace and myself are not destined to agree better, than have been proverbial of the lord and the heir of Poyntzstett."

"I can't admit that, Poyntz, and won't suffer it. I am no such disciplinarian as my father, and the young must have latitude. You admire Jacobi, and follow Worsley. I see, too, the day, when the latter at least must mend, and when we can meet as political friends. But for the present, I must seek allies on the Liberal side, and at least bear up between two proud and exclusive parties."

Mr. Plynlimon, of whom the Duke, or at

east his son, entertained so just an opinion, was quite as busy as they, and as keen, in bettering his fortunes, and, if possible, crowning them by a wealthy marriage. The fortune, which he had suddenly made, had been accomplished by starving the cotton market. Possessed of the secrets of the manufacturers and their wants, and at the same time making use of his colonial and transatlantic experience, he had combined with certain American houses, to monopolize or retard the supply of the all-important article. It had, in consequence, risen to an exorbitant price, and allowed Plynlimon ample time not only to gratify his associates by the sale of their consignments at triple value, but to fill his own pocket with profit far exceeding that of any real sale. For men can gamble with cotton or with sugar, as they can with electors, or with dice. The former, indeed, bears the respectable name of speculation, and does not disgrace the most sober character, whilst the man who, with the same purpose, indulges in *rouge-et-noir* or *écarté*, is considered as a dissipated scapegrace. Nothing but being the wielder and representative of Miss Worksworth's wealth, could have enabled Plynlimon to conduct so gigantic an operation

with the perseverance and steadiness necessary to its success. How far he risked his patron's property, was a scruple that did not arrest him, and when success crowned his efforts, the immorality and danger of what it was based on, was forgotten, and disappeared.

Having thus levied an immense sum as tribute on his brother manufacturers, a spoliation at which they were by no means indignant—on the contrary, they deemed it fair play, and consoled themselves by the reflection that their turn might come, in the course of trade and speculation, for making each his own fortune at the expense of his neighbours—Plynlimon then threw his fortune into a railway, so as to become its master. He had not money to engage in this giant enterprise when they were young and uncertain, and when whatever gains might accrue to those who embarked in them were fairly earned by the boldness and the risk. He only came in when they were not, indeed, failing, but dwindling to those normal and humble returns, which it requires the economy and strictness of private enterprise to render solid and remunerating.

Now, as every object, and every instru-

ment, and every place, about the railroad was jobbed, all the officers and authorities deriving profit from every promotion and every appointment, of course there was nothing cheap, and nothing fit, either in the things in use or the men employed. To make such an enterprise pay was impossible, without a reform, that could only be profitable to the shareholders, and a dead loss to every one else. Consequently, it was not yet to be thought of. But dividends could be secured to the old shares by the creation of new for branch lines and extensions, that would afford the means of ample manipulation to those who held what the French call the *planche aux assignats*.

People are said to run about the world, and to be versant in a host of occupations, before they light upon the one that actually befits their nature. Mr. Plynlimon had run through a great many, and in many hemispheres ; but he never was so much at home as in presiding over an assembly of his railroad. His appearance was, like his general reputation, probity itself—correct, sober, staid, gravity on his brow, and plausibility on his lips. When with this unquestionable exterior he arose to

recapitulate the past history and the present prospects of the great enterprise committed to his care, nothing could equal the enthusiasm of those embarked with him in the great speculation. Every one present was, indeed aware that the line had cost more than could ever be remunerated with a satisfactory rate of interest. It brought in three per cent., but as the outlay of capital was not closed, and as interest was paid out of it, the happy shareholders received six and seven per cent. for money that was really bringing in but two and-a-half. To make this continue, to envelope it in mystery, to find excuse for extending the concern, and increasing the capital, without awaking suspicion, was the aim of the entire *conciliabule*. And the great art was to conduct such finances with all that solemn aspect of probity, which is as necessary to the success of the Englishman of business and money as his going to church. Plynlimon was the man of all others for this purpose. He performed his part so well as not only to leave the outer public and the would-be purchasers of shares completely in the dark, but to deceive many of those before whom were all the means of seeing, or of forming a juster conclusion,—that

own eyes and their own figures deceived, and that things, instead of being in the rate condition they seemed to be, were, y said, "all right."

eat was the astonishment of the *locos* of sworth and Shuttlefield to find their old r become their new master, and to per- with what skill and success Mr. Plyn-

dropped the shuttle and the mill for gine and the rail. As he said himself, siness was worth attending to, whose ins uts, and items, whose ingoings and out- s, price of material, and price of manu- e, were as well known as sun-set and

Now, nothing could be done of any t, in mercantile or in political life, save it was enveloped in some position of ry; and it was therefore that new specu- s were so much preferable to old. The owever, still had charms for Mr. Plynli- for, although he had outgrown the lust of ial superintendence, he proposed nothing an purchasing all the factories and inte- n Worksworth from the young lady of lk; nay, more, he purposed paying her m with her own money. But this act

of legerdemain was not to be performed in a day.

Hitherto Mr. Plynlimon had kept himself uncoloured and unembarrassed by politics, and became a person without a stake in the country and desirous of planting one, no matter in what hedge. If he had been anxious to serve the Poyntzts' interest in the election, and eject Pevensey, whom he hated, he had done so covertly, and with firm denial. But now having assumed a part, and engaged in speculations, which required that credit, not merely of his standing and wealth, but as much as friends, abettors, and every adjunct could give him, he was obliged to look for support in political party. He was driven thus still more urgently by the fact of the great personages of his own old sect, not, indeed, turning their backs upon him, but assuming an air suspicious of his steadiness. Mr. Plynlimon therefore, raised boldly up the standard of Toryism, and offered himself as an agent and an instrument of that party, wherever he had influence. Pevensey was manifestly his determined foe, and, indeed, had from the first suspected him. But the man to whom Mr

Worksworth had given his confidence claimed, at least, his outward respect ; and any attempt of his to reveal his turpitude to the daughter of that gentleman might be construed as interested ; and, strong as duty often urged him to the denunciation, delicacy compelled him to shrink from it.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE most hopeless and unfavourable country in the world for the malcontent and seditious man is England. So varied are its aspects ; so diverse its moods ; so full is it of ups and downs ; so continually are new ideas started, which, like a quarry, bring the hounds in full cry after it, to the dereliction of every other thought and pursuit ; so sudden comes the summer breeze of prosperity amidst the icy one of adversity ; and there is withal so much unmeasured philosophy, patience, courage, and good humour in the English character ; that, short of being saddled with Stuarts, Straffords, and Lauds, for a whole century, nothing could prompt Englishmen to think seriously of disaffection. The French, with all their reputation, are not half so light-hearted, and they are infinitely more rancorous.

If the lower orders of English life were French, they would be much more humble and more contented in appearance, but in reality there would lurk beneath all this a universally hidden desire to cut the throats of that higher incumbent class which does certainly monopolize a prodigiously large portion of the good things of this world. It is not yet known how the mild blood of the Anglo-Saxon has turned so effectively to bitterness in America, that the very idea of an idle man, or the sight of a gentleman of fortune with his hands in his pockets, or the reins of a coach-and-four in his hands, would be such an eye-sore and an abomination, that either would with difficulty escape being stoned: in England, there is respect and admiration for the one and the other; so little does envy take root in our happy soil.

Thaddeus suffered with great impatience his confinement in the gaol of a great Northern town, which confinement the prison regulations and the prison authorities rendered as degrading and severe as they could. Although his severity was visited upon him as a supposed Chartist, he had not the proud conviction of being a political martyr. It had been

but an election riot after all. A really treasonable attempt, and a conviction for it, would have been more flattering to his pride. And yet even for that he would have had to seek consolation in his own breast. For he found not one amongst the prisoners around him, even amongst those condemned with him, who had one political idea or feeling, or who looked on a riot as more than a spree. He had heard of associations and organizations, from which a man in his position might have expected sympathy and aid. But what with activity of work, and perhaps the discredit which foreign parties and absurdity had thrown upon subversive attempts, they seemed to have vanished from the land. If any minds were breeding discontent and disaffection, it was in some new vein, and with a view to some new effects, yet untried and unexplored. In short, Thaddeus, in his humble way, was as discontented with politics and party, as Delmer himself, or as Pevensey, or any other public man, officer or soldier. The world seemed inclined to get on without politics at all, and in truth to get on much happier and better. When Miss Worksworth, therefore, procured the liberation of Thaddeus, he left the

prison-walls with his fervour much diminished, and with abated ideas of the regeneration of his country, or amelioration of his class, by means of either violence or combination. If he was thus induced to discard ideas of public vengeance or effort, he was but the more sharpened to pursue the private feud, which he had against Plynlimon, to whom he had reason to attribute no small portion of the severity at least of his incarceration. His enemy, unfortunately for him, had become a prince in that very calling in which Thaddeus served. Plynlimon was a railroad magnate, and Thaddeus one of the insects that had come to life in that gigantic industry. The more or the greater tyranny on the one hand, and servility on the other; the more power the mighty great have to crush, and to humble smaller means of resistance. But Thaddeus was determined to bide his time, and avenge what he knew to be his own wrongs, as well as those of others.

Miss Worksworth had gone herself to the North to procure his liberation, and to give aid and council personally to Rachel. She naturally found herself some few days after at Mertons. The world of ideas and sentiments,

as well as of things, had made many revolutions for her since she had first looked out upon it from that hospitable mansion. She was then about to start eagerly upon a path that seemed full of joy, promise, and beneficial results. She had surely in her hands the elements of success in almost any aim; yet she had achieved, or advanced, or enjoyed as little as the individual of her time and sex least favoured by fortune.

The Earl was right well pleased with the turn that affairs and opinions had taken. Content and prosperity had been the result of cheap bread. The Radicalism, which had originated or powerfully aided in rendering the measure thus successful, had not, as was feared, profited by it so far as to gain the manifest ascendant. The landed aristocracy, after giving up their ten per cent. of rent for a time, were powerful and respected as ever. Religious fanaticism had died away, as well as political. As to the squabble of the Whig party, or the ministry deprived of its official ascendancy, the Earl cared little. Never were the principles of moderate and gentle Liberalism, that is, of Whiggism, so unquestionably predominant. If the politician, whom

the Whigs chose as their chief or representative, did not know how to keep their personal lead under these circumstances, it was their individual fault; and the Earl at least saw no reason to commiserate them.

The gay, the amiable, the sensible Lady Louisa, had already married, but was with her husband at Mertons. She received Naomi coldly enough, to the severe mortification of the latter; and it required days to restore anything like intimacy.

"You will find here, Miss Worksworth, the same faces, and the same friends, almost the same guests, as when you were here before. We never change!"

"Who could desire to see anything change at Mertons: a perfect world in itself,—of friendship, occupation, and enjoyment. But you must not taunt a poor solitary individual like myself, who has no world but that she had to look for and intrude into."

"I hope, you found one to your taste."

"I found pretty much what all find: some pastime, some disappointment."

"You found, I'll be bound to say, nothing better for searching and for being fastidious, than what was placed before your eyes at first."

"If you mean Mertons, I have indeed found nothing like it."

"Not even your princely château, and its princely guests in Auvergne."

Naomi smiled, and exclaimed, "It would be difficult to imagine scenes or societies so unlike!"

"It is a pity you went to France, and to France only with Lady ——; for in France she could show you nothing that cannot be seen by every one,—the society of diplomats, and of the few noblesse that exist. Whereas the world beyond the Rhine has its high-born unapproachables,—people who still make a religion of heraldry, and who are numerous enough to make principedom a class. You would have had a world to study at Vienna, of what in Paris is but a coterie."

"I have seen quite enough of foreign life," said Naomi.

"My father has had a run of foreign celebrities: M. Guizot is here at present, just arrived from a pilgrimage to Holyrood; M. Thiers is expected, with Mr. Sagacis; your old friend, Mr. Delmer, promises to repose his weary head with us a day or two; and his friend, Jacobi, has also promised to come,

and make us solemn Whigs the target of his satire."

"What an epitome of the world an English country-house may be made, and often does become."

M. Guizot was a fine wreck in the middle of the century; for body, mind, hopes, theories, and humour, were all broken, all in decadence. Guizot indeed was never young: he looked fifty in his professor's chair thirty years before, though he may not have looked above sixty at the present time. There was the same frail body, *blasé* aspect, doctoral, thought-shaken voice. The only marked difference lay in the clear, dark piercing eye of the man of the South, which had become glassy, as such eyes are so apt to do, giving a wild and unaccountable expression to the face. French statesmen may be divided into two classes,—those who have tried constitutional government, and those who have neither believed in it nor tried it. Both have hitherto made equally signal failures. That is, it has never yet been discovered how France is to be governed,—with or without a constitution. M. Guizot's, however, was the most signal failure of them all; for no man enjoyed

either such ample power or such ample experience. He had king, government, chamber, all in his hands,—with the resources of the richest country, — the talent of the most intellectual society, — the swords of half a million of the bravest soldiers. With all this he allowed the monarchy to perish, and the monarchic principle to die of inanition and starvation, whilst surrounded with heaps of all that could strengthen and feed it. If given the same elements, to produce the same result as M. Guizot, would appear impossible. The greatest fool on earth, one should think, could not have produced such a result. Yet one of the wisest and most cunning men did. What a humiliation for intellect! What a problem for humanity!

As murderers bury themselves in the severe discipline of a convent, and as rakes give up even moderate pleasure for asceticism, M. Guizot, being shipwrecked on citizen monarchy, had given his adherence to the legitimate one. He had been worshipping at the shrine of Holyrood. Such acts cannot be considered those of judgment—but of despair. M. Guizot's fault all through life, as through literature, was to forget, that there was any

such thing as the people. Instead of studying France, and of casting about to see how the French people might be made to love constitutional government, and to feel its uses and her benefits, he merely looked at England as an example, and kept its history before him as a book, instead of opening and looking into the great pages of French life, which were in truth before his eyes, but which neither he nor Louis Philippe could read. Constitutional government has gone from France; and, to its disgrace be it said, its disappearance has not made the peasant conscious of a difference, or chagrined by a loss. M. Guizot could give no account whatever of things, and seemed merely to think that he had not been Tory enough and severe enough. And his opinion was evident, that the Whigs, instead of moving England by reform and free trade, were letting it down till the popular ocean was on a level with its gunwale. And then in the first rough weather the English bark would founder, as the French had done.

M. Thiers, who succeeded M. Guizot at Mertons—for two such luminaries could not meet in one friendly sphere—was like him a man of the South. The one is of Nîmes, the

other of Aix. If the Gironde furnished the Convention with its best orator, the Rhone claimed to have supplied the eloquence of the citizen monarchy. Thiers was of the Buonaparte build,—small of figure, large of head,—with the same square features, said to indicate decision and power. There was the same great reasoning faculty, the same condensation of all that was worth knowing or saying of a subject, to the rejection of all the dross; the same *esprit positif*, that could not live in the clouds and mist of theory. The broken voice of Guizot was replaced in Thiers by a small, conversational whisper, that went into *falsetto*, when the owner sought to make it vehement. But the whisper and the *falsetto* poured forth, certainly, the most original and charming vein of conversation to be met with, even on the banks of the Seine. Thiers is certainly not the best writer in the world, but he is *the* best talker.

He was, however, like Cassandra in England. People had no faith in him. It were too long to explain why the powerful Thiers is the opposite of everything English. He is a Tory democrat; that is, for ruling the world by a strong will and a despotic power,—

but not for the benefit of an aristocracy, or a dynasty, but in the interests of the democracy itself. Whilst M. Guizot was imbued with the doctrines of Protestantism, and saw the horrors of the revolution typified in the execution of his own father, Thiers, unlike him, saw none of the excesses, and heard of nothing but the glories of the revolution. Guizot's reigning idea, was to close the gulph of revolution by a happy imitation of England: Thiers's impulse to continue the great work of Napoleon, covering it with a varnish of representative government.

What amazed every English guest at Merton was, the complete identity in the sentiments of these eminent Frenchmen,—that their sole duty as statesmen was to uphold the external pride, glory, and power of France; objects that no English statesman ever dreams of, they well knowing that a country's power and pride will take care of themselves, if the internal government be wise, successful, and affords scope for the development of the national faculties and resources. Of the science of government, of the real management of a people, these two great men had no ideas beyond those of a Prefect of Police; that is,

resistance to popular demands, and maintenance of public *order*. *Order* and *resistance*—such were the shibboleths, such the whole secret of their internal government. And with these they thought to govern a highly civilized, advanced, and constitutional country. Yet, both were men of genius, who had read, seen, and thought much; and yet, both put together, were not more advanced as politicians than Percival or Vansittart. This was not that M. Guizot and M. Thiers were not both men of high intellectual stature, but the political platform on which they stood, was so low that these men, however eminent, were pigmies by the side of even mediocre English statesmen.

The diversion caused by the presence of these renowned persons was great relief to Charles Delmer and Naomi Worksworth, who were enabled to make that tacit explanation of how one stood towards the other, and how time and circumstances had modified their respective opinions. All this can be done without speaking a word, at least without uttering more than commonplaces. It was a pleasure that this should be done unobserved, and amidst a crowd distracted by other people

and other objects of curiosity or attention. Charles, in the excitement of that society, was the same gay, charming, and intellectual man of the world that he had ever been. As he addressed Naomi, however, after some months of absence, and perhaps of coldness, there was no gaiety in the manner, which was on the contrary serious, even to emotion. He seemed to have repented of his austere and harsh temper; and determined to rush at once, or at least without delay, into a frank disclosure of all that he had husbanded so long, and treasured so profoundly.

His expressive and foreshadowed intent would have had resistless effect a year previous, on her whom he approached. The serious feelings of the girl were then uppermost; but now girlhood had vanished. And girlhood's one thought, affection, had not indeed ceased to be cherished and to be prized. But there had grown alongside of it a host of tastes, requirements, bitternesses, jealousies, which render a woman's heart so complex, and her taste so fastidious. Prudence too, worldly prudence, had come to make itself heard,—not the prudence that looks merely to wealth and pecuniary considerations, but that which saw

the necessity of being upheld in the world by an arm more firm, a soul more lofty, a position more rightful and more sound than Delmer's. Her ideas, in fact, of him and of hundreds, were ninety degrees removed from what they were a twelvemonth before. The change of manners had been even greater than the change of sentiment. She had lived with women accustomed to command, — women whose natural, or whose assumed right, it was to have the world, and especially the world of mankind, at their feet. And without adopting the arrogance which she had witnessed, Naomi had caught something of the air.

"You look, Miss Worksworth, on the future leader of the House of Commons as if he was a very small person," said Lady Louisa, who having married a commoner, preserved her Christian and maiden appellation.

"I am very glad indeed to hear that Mr. Delmer is likely to reach that goal of his ambition, the mere looking out for which seemed to have so petrified him. But how is it? I have been for months a total stranger to politics."

"You, who took such an interest in public affairs and public men! We thought you

looked upon such struggles as ladies of old did on tournaments, ready to provoke a quarrel with their glove, and reward the victor with their hand."

"A silly creature, you thought me."

"There are much more silly tastes than that, much more unwise ways of testing interest and attachment. But your researches have resulted, perhaps, in the discovery of a race superior to that of politicians."

"To be candid with you, I was weary of politics and politicians, and found relief amongst those who are gay, cheerful, pleasant, and even intellectual, without studying their books."

"What do you celestials study?"

"Each other."

"A barren volume, I should say."

"Yet what is political science and study, but a knowledge of English men, English minds, English influences, English society."

"And so you found the philosopher's-stone in the saloons of fashion."

"Nay, if you attack, you pique me to defend what you attack. Pardon me, I am not more in love with professors of fashion,

than with professors of politics. There is a great deal of worthlessness and emptiness in both; but men alone obtain command and eminence in the one; there is for womanly ambition something not to be despised in the other."

"You were the very last person I should have suspected of being captivated by any eminence that fashion can bestow."

"Fashion is a disparaging word. That which I prize, and which I find no word to express, is what no one is found indifferent to."

"It appears to me that, like most people, you are aiming and craving at precisely what you do not want, and what you cannot have."

"And what is that,—you bitter truth-teller?"

"You remember our agreeing with Mr. Jacobi about the three claims to distinction—birth, wealth and talent; none of these are of much worth in themselves, but for the influence and respect universally allowed them. To combine the three is denied to almost every one. Now with the two last, why will you aim at those mystic, and incomprehen-

able, and unseizable advantages, which birth knows how to command from the idle vanity of the world."

"My dear Lady Louisa, what is talent in a woman, when it is so little in a man as to be the object of contempt and pity, if not linked with a commanding position, that allows of its use and exercise."

"Talent, indeed, of itself, may be unprofitable, especially when coupled with delicacy and honour. But combine wealth with it, and what may it not grasp? what not obtain?"

"In England, it appears to me, that the utmost talent and the utmost wealth together, can only attain to the honour of standing on the same step, on which the youngest and silliest scion of the aristocracy takes his stand when quitting the University. Even riches must have descended a generation or two, before it is respected."

"In fact, you would like a coronet?"

"Not for the title. But position is everything for a woman."

"But surely it is a man, not a class, that a woman marries; it is his form and nature, mind and temper, that constitute his worth;

not the adventitious circumstances that surround him."

"Good sentiments for the days of romance. But when one has grown out of them, and when one has come to prize the circumstances more than the man—"

"How very horrible. I cannot imagine how one could arrive at such ideas."

"Without being born to them."

"You do not pretend to say I was born to them?"

"I do indeed. But they were so much a part of your nature and condition as to be imperceptible. Now with me they have come late, and have been reasoned out, in part by mortification and disgust. You think it monstrous. But it is true, and I could show it to be natural. Thus I have come to regard man in his class, more than in his person."

"You are a downright, bold, uncompromising, social heretic."

There was no need of explanation, of formal suit or of rejection, either gay or grave, on the part of Charles Delmer towards Naomi, or of Naomi towards Charles Delmer. He saw clearly enough, and in a very brief time, that whatever chance he might have had to touch

the young woman's heart, he had allowed that chance to perish, and the time to go by. And there are no second chances given in love, or even in friendship. The feverish flush of the one, when allowed to subside by want of enterprise or exertion, can never be rekindled. When imagination, so ardent in beautifying and enthroning the object of affection, does not turn to break or cast it down, but leaves it to rot neglected on its pedestal, that is a hopeless case. When friendship even cools, it cannot be rekindled by repentance or by after-thought. Nay, common acquaintance itself, if commenced wrongly, is not to be set right.

Charles Delmer could not deny to himself that his sentence was just. He had dallied with sentiments that should not have been trifled with. He might have done so in delicacy,—might have held back from the sense of his own inability to come forward but as a fortune-seeker, and from his still greater backwardness to make himself a rival to such a suitor as Lord Poyntz. Lord Poyntz himself, however, might have held back for similar reasons, and might especially have been disgusted by the marked and unmistakeable favour extended to Charles Delmer in the

election. There was another and a secret reason for Charles's backwardness. But all such causes seemed to have been removed. Notwithstanding the recent failure to overthrow or replace the Premier, that braver and creator of obstacles to his own eminence was now at variance with his oldest friend and colleague. Another ministerial break-up was inevitable, and Charles was so certain of first rank, that his friends could scarcely refrain from congratulating him upon it. Lord Poyntz was at least not more ardent and pressing than Delmer had been himself; and Charles had seen one by one all the obstacles removed to his at once stepping to the grand position which had been the dream of his life. He felt entitled to ask Naomi's hand. He had eminence to confer, for worth or wealth to be received; and both combined could not but command that rank, which for himself he prized not, but which was attainable if desired. Such was the happy crowning and realization of life's hopes, which was at once crushed and scattered by the strange and unaccountable humour which had come over Naomi, and which Lady Louisa herself, with all her kindness for Charles, found it hopeless to combat, or to see vanish of itself.

The Earl was as little contented with Naomi as was his daughter. If the latter had found the warm generosity of the heart succeeded by a worldly chill, his lordship found the lady's views of the more serious business and struggle of life modified in a similar manner. She no longer worshipped what liberals vaguely call patriotism, with implicit trust. She seemed to have, on the contrary, an infidel mistrust of the religion of progress. She saw no longer that very marked difference between Whig and Tory, which had been taught the belligerents of the two camps, and which accordingly prevailed in their histories. She had found, in her short experience of London life, the Whig aristocracy much duller, much prouder, much colder, much more influenced by the spirit of *clique* than their rivals, and much more tinctured by that *morgue*, which marks an aristocracy which deems itself that of talent, as well as of birth. However staunch a Whig, it was impossible not to perceive the monstrous errors made in the management of that greatest of English parties for a series of years back,—errors which, had they not been compensated by a still greater amount of blunders in the management of the Tory party, would have

led to the undisturbed ascendancy of the latter.

Jacobi said that the Whigs were adventurers, who never knew how to live and thrive on their own resources, but were always making up their deficiencies by seducing bands of soldiers from their antagonists to come over to them, and that for this treason they were always willing to pay by ceding first place and superior station. Whenever the Tory party generated talent, it grew forth into a kind of excrescence, which ended by detaching itself from the Tories, and making up the always deficient talent of the Whigs for genuine and true popularity. Thus, a quarter of a century back, the Canningites had detached themselves from the Tories, had formed a band apart, and whilst the Tories repudiated them, the Whigs had won them by offering to serve under them, and undergoing even their humour and caprice. Having lived by and under the Canningites for a quarter of a century, and worn them out to the last stump, which was Palmerston, they had now rooted out that very stump as worthless, and were ready to put themselves under the Peelites, to make use of them, as they had made use of the

Canningites, till they were worn out. In all this, if power was kept, pride was sacrificed, and Whiggism, instead of preserving the high character of an aristocratic party, merely succeeded by adroitness in filching men from the Tories, and questions from the Radicals. This was done, no doubt, with the greatest affectation of dignity and personation of gravity, but which Jacobi declared to be the most solemn and consummate humbug in existence.

Jacobi, of course, represented parties with his own exaggeration and malice. What he alleged of the Whigs during the last quarter of a century, he might have said of the Tories of the end of the last century. The natural tendency of every representative system is to split into two equal parts, the majority being secured out of that ascendancy which the possession of power gives. When circumstances disturb the natural equality that usually prevails beneath and independent of the difference, there is a tendency to set the balance even by the detachment of a shoot, severing by its own weight from the overgrown majority. Were the fluctuations, changes, breaks-up, coalitions, fallings-in and fallings-off of parties,

in any representative system of government, observed for a sufficient length of time, the phenomena, there is not a doubt, would be found as constant, as regular, and as subject to rule, as the tides are proved to be on the movements of the heavenly bodies. However unmanageable or unaccountable man's will seems to be when he is contemplated as an individual, viewed in the mass and in extent of time, his conduct, nature, and motives, are quite as normal and traceable as any of those inanimate systems of machinery into which neither will nor judgment can be supposed to enter.

The Earl, though he admitted much to be true in the sarcasm of Jacobi, though he regretted the gradual defection of the Whig party since it had ceased to have as social head any first-rate spirit amongst commoners to look to, or any noble of popular name, as well as respected character, to hold up the old blue and buff banner and be the rallying point of the party,—he was still wroth at such schemes as those in which Delmer had joined, for marshalling the old Whig party under, or at least in subservience to, its ancient enemies.

He at first had imagined that Miss Workworth's alienation from Charles was owing to a strong sense entertained by her of his proposed dereliction, and he could not but approve of such high-mindedness. He found, however, that in this he was mistaken, and that the general disgust conceived by the young lady for mere political heroism extended to all and every party, and recognised very little difference between them.

"You must ease people's minds, Miss Workworth," said Jacobi, "as to whom or what party you will support in an election, should such take place. You are at present the great enigma of the North."

"As much so to myself, Mr. Jacobi, as to any one else, and am apparently chiefly governed by contradictions. A visit to Manchester made me inveterately Whig, from disgust of the stupid antagonism there prevalent against all who usurped a bold social eminence. Tory arrogance again, developed amidst high-flying dames and seigneurs, awakened the democratic feelings of a daughter of manufactures. Since, here, not to be a Whig is heresy, I feel the strongest inclination to join your standard,

Mr. Jacobi, or at least the standard which you uphold."

"I may, at least, assume that you are not displeased with Delmer for hearkening to a scheme of coalition?"

"By no means, if he really has done so, and made up his mind that it is a wise and serviceable scheme. But I fear he is but torturing himself with a kind of suspended purpose, anxious to enhance his reputation in a young and unshackled party, but trembling lest his doing so should be considered treason by magnates such as the Earl."

"Charles is, unfortunately, a man of too much delicacy and too many scruples for his profession. Such a scheme as a coalition between Whigs and Peelites is what I must denounce. But after all, philosophically looked at, it is natural; it is the old landed and territorial liberals breaking their banner and dispersing their party, in order to rally under those of the mercantile Conservatives. But it must be sore to such worthy people as the Earl to see the old Whiggism of Yorkshire strike its colours to the new-born Toryism of Manchester. However his lordship is one

of those who have clamoured and fought for progress. So though it comes in a shape he may not relish, it is too late to complain."

"When I had the pleasure of seeing you last year, Mr. Jacobi, you seemed to think the relics of Sir Robert to be a mere transition party, doomed to disappear. Now you seem to think the Whigs about to commit suicide in their favour."

"Precisely. Both court and commonalty have retained the idea of the all-wisdom of Peel, and, of course, of the same wisdom of his disciples. The Whigs cannot resist the feeling in favour of rivals coming from two such opposite quarters. With the recent flexibility of the party they will dive under for the time, hoping to absorb, not to be absorbed."

"This will bring them cares, hopes, and fears."

"No doubt. But I must refrain from talking politics to you."

"Why so?"

"Because I presume on our triumph amidst their squabble, and I should be sorry to try, or to succeed, in making a convert of you."

"And why?"

"I am the mere champion of private interests, when I speak with you."

"Private! whose, pray?"

"Delmer's."

"My support shall not be withdrawn in case of an election. I would not remove a round from the ladder by which he ascends. When at the top he can take care of himself."

"This is friendly language, but cold."

"It is frank and sincere."

"I fear you have not divined poor Charles's secret."

"That is very possible."

"It is certain. For you speak slightly of him, as an unstable, vacillating character, as one weak of will, as incapable of a firm assurance, or of a strong opinion. Alas! Miss Worksworth, you not only do not know Charles, but you never knew him. A more manly, frank, and decided character, did not exist. But of late,—I should not say of late, for even before he knew you,—doubts and misgivings have come over him, and though shaken off at times, have recurred with more

and more strength, and of a nature to paralyse any manly resolution, and even his affections."

"I cannot in the least comprehend you."

"What I fear then is, that since the period I mention, there has developed itself in our friend the symptoms of a mortal disease, symptoms which at times disappear and are disbelieved, but which recur as terrible monitors with more solemn warnings. The man who feels himself one day under such a menace, and who shakes it off another, may well be excused for vacillation and want of resolve. It is the nature of many of such complaints, too, to disappear before the brisk stimulus of excitement, to recur with redoubled force under the collapse of dulness and disappointment. Charles's life has been an alternation of these hopes and fears. One must not wonder, then, if all ardour and friendship one day, he is all hesitation and despair the next. It is hope as well as genius struggling against fate, and against that most trying of all professions, the political one, so full of reverses, so thickly strewn with sacrifices and disappointments."

The countenance of Naomi betrayed her having, for the first time, been made aware of a secret that explained much mystery. She was much affected by it, however fixedly her mind had been made up with regard to him. And, of course, a marked difference in her bearing to him during their stay at Mertons was the result.

CHAPTER IX.

A SOLDIER is expected to stand the fire of a battery at point-blank distance without shrinking. A sailor the same. But both have a commander in whom they trust, and whose duty it is not to expose a life without necessity and without a motive. If naval and military rules were so changed and modified, that it was the soldier who brought on the action, and that it was the commander who was to stand its brunt, there are few who would say that the position was either tenable or agreeable. Such, however, is the order of service in what are called constitutional governments. In graver matters of policy, in those which knit or throw off, strengthen or weaken alliances, which smooth the way for peace or provoke the preludes of war, it is a minister, and often not a prime minister, who acts,

whilst it is the sovereign, or his dynasty, who incur the risk, and, in fact, stand the fire. Historians, at least English historians, are given to blame King William and the Georges, for not having been sufficiently constitutional, and for making their personal will and judgment felt in that series of wars and alliances which constituted the chief events of the time. But all these monarchs were playing their skins as well as their crowns, their own fortune as well as their country's, and not only had some right to look to it, but they would not have been men if they had not.

No Russian soldier is better trained to stand the fire of the battery, than a modern English king to undergo the hostile fire of all the courts of Europe, if parliament and the constitution so order it. But, unfortunately, the constitution has provided so little for constitutional checks on the foreign policy of ministers, and parliament at intervals does grow so utterly indifferent, or remains so utterly ignorant on the subject, that the most interested party is thus compelled to look, as every prudent father of a family must, a little to his own concerns.

In 1847 and 1848, the British minister

took, certainly, the generous and liberal view of the state of things. He put trust in the permanent triumph of popular principles and national causes ; and though he gave no assistance, but coldly withheld it, even where the giving of support might have made the good cause triumph—as was the case both in Sicily and in Prussia—still he showed his interest and leanings. These interests and leanings were undoubtedly towards the moderate and constitutional liberals in all countries. But, alas ! such folk on the continent were universally without experience, skill, courage, or, indeed, any of the qualities which uphold a cause, or ensure its triumph. They succumbed ; British hope and feeling with them. And Lord Tiverton, like another Cicero, became the arch enemy of that triumphant triumvirate, who secured by force of arms their seats upon the thrones of the east of Europe. The triumvirs demanded not the head, but the place of the British Cicero. But England was not Rome, and its Cicero was empowered to continue his philippics ; the result was, that England, and its dynasty, were threatened with a hostile coalition—a coalition which, in defensive war, it might indeed laugh to scorn. But the laugh

however powerful, would be expensive; and the united hostility of even despotism might lead to serious derangement and difficulties. The sovereign called the attention of the prime minister to the danger; and even he was surprised to perceive that his colleague had done no less than enter upon a personal war against all the sovereigns of Europe, and this without having secured the support of his own. The great Chatham, who wanted to knock Spain to pieces like an old hulk, whether his own sovereign willed it or not, was nothing in constitutional spirit to Lord Tiverton.

It has been said how Charles Delmer admired and supported Lord Tiverton when the triumvirs first set their batteries at him. He admired his Lordship for having not a few of the great qualities of Chatham. Although his eloquence was of the hesitating school of modern times, and not the continuous flow of Chatham, yet his diatribes breathed the same spirit with those of him who triumphed over the house of Bourbon: like Chatham, he was hated of the Bourbons; like Chatham, he, too, was detested of domestic radicals as an aristocrat; and, like Chatham, Lord Tiverton was

loved and cherished in the City of London, that abode of peace, as a conquering minister, whose spirit was the best protection to British trade, and who, if he made war, would at least open new ports to commerce.

But whilst so many were admiring Lord Tiverton's spirited career and liberal exertions, he had his own misgivings; he dreaded for England, or for himself, the enmity of the crowned triumvirate; and, in an unlucky time for himself, he thought he had found in the self-erected autocrat of the French people a set-off and an ally against them. This, like most of the prime ideas of British statesmen, Lord Tiverton kept to himself, as Peel was wont to do, and those who went before and after him, who are unfortunate enough to be Lord Burleighs in mystery, when they ought to be Lord Chesterfields in conciliation. Lord Tiverton determined to keep his purpose a secret, and merely to assure, in words, the envoy of the new autocrat of his amicable feelings. A treacherous diplomatist, whose play was crossed by his chief, discovered and divulged the secret; and Lord Tiverton, unexplained, uncomprehended, and disdaining to set himself right, after having made war at the risk of his place

and reputation with European tyrants, was discovered in the act of furtively shaking the hand of the most unscrupulous of them all.

Such a discovery destroyed at once the little cohesion that existed between the members of the old party. The enemies of Lord Tiverton would not see in what he had done a conservative effort to secure at least one powerful alliance; they merely saw the opinion strengthened of his being an unsafe minister. The sovereign, though silent, must have felt that the act of the minister changed the position of the English dynasty and court in Europe, exposing it to dire enmities, and most adventurous risks. But the old Whig Premier disdained to regard any of these things, when he beheld the much more heinous crime of a dereliction of those traditional and historic principles of freedom on which the party stood, and from which no motive of diplomacy or expediency could make him move. There remained for him but the courageous and suicidal act of severing that right arm on which he had so long leaned, and which had so long upheld him by its force and its address.

On no ear did this decisive wreck of the

party fall with greater significance than that of Charles Delmer. He had returned from the north relieved from a great anxiety, but considerably lowered in spirit and health. Even his mother, who would look on the gloomy side of anything, was struck by his altered mien, and humbled.

She knew her son was to have met Vorksworth; she knew, too, that obedience was a great measure to her exhortations, and she determined to consider his political views as already sufficiently secure to entitle him to speak out in confident tone to the world, and the mother had already built for him one of the palaces of the Arabian Nights, which, in truth, might have been his, but that once and at first addressed himself with the frank sincerity of youth to the jewels of the girl. The palace, however, of glass, and had been shattered by a look—look of coldness and of awakened woman.

Charles told his mother of his reception; she would not believe it. She accused him of a sinking nature and misgiving spirit; but assured her there had been no room or occasion for the displaying of weakness or backwardness on his part. Experience of the great

world had had its natural effect upon a woman's mind ; and even without the interference of the world at all, he had thrown away his chance—that chance which from the female heart there is no possibility of securing a second time. At all events, the dream was over, and he was glad of it.

“ I had ceased to be sanguine myself,” said Mrs. Delmer, “ since I heard of the kind of society into which Miss Worksworth soared.”

“ It was curiosity, I believe, not vanity, that impelled her.”

“ She will soon find, if she has not found it out already, that she can be no denizen there, and may return to her natural tastes.”

“ It is all one to me,” said Charles ; “ I have made up my accounts with womanhood. I have not spirit enough left to engage in the serious responsibility of making another human being happy. I must dream on by myself.”

“ The one great idea realized,” said Mrs. Delmer, “ will soon give life and substance to another. If honourable ambition attain its merited prize, all the other adjuncts of happiness will soon come to group themselves around the fortunate man.”

“ A wife and a name can always be found,

then, and always commanded by good fortune? That is a singular creed for you. Now, I must say, I never found bad fortune an obstacle to the appearance of such bright visions, nor to their coming clothed in smiles."

"And why not have grasped the fair vision, Charles?"

"Why, indeed? I was not born for that happiness. And, after all, it might have marred that which was destined to be my vocation—at least, I may now so hope—political success. If I fail of that, at all events there is but myself whom that failure will affect; I have no other hopes than my own ventured in the bark."

"And mine."

"Yours, mother, and mine are indeed one, inseparable."

Charles had not the courage to tell his mother the misgiving which more and more undermined his spirit,—which allowed him to follow to its utmost that pursuit of ambition and place in which he had all along engaged, but which made it his duty to shrink from mingling his heart and hopes with those of woman. Charles felt his strength unequal even to its worldly struggle. This, indeed,

might be momentary languor, and was more likely to prove so, from the fact, that political occupation in even parliament alone, proved exciting and encouraging while it lasted; but such efforts were followed by periods of exhaustion, and his mind, like his body, could not but vacillate between periods of hope and strength, and periods of despondency and weakness.

The time approached when the success of Sir Everard Grimstone's scheme seemed assured. The Whig party weakened, and divided in itself, was now subdivided, its very core broken by the supposed crime of Lord Tiverton, or rather by the treachery which had divulged that crime. For such thoughts are conceived, and such words uttered every day, from politician to politician, and from diplomatist to diplomatist. But here the blot was so completely hit, that to slur it over, amongst so much enmity and such interminable and material division, was impossible. The days of the ministry were therefore counted; sink it must this time, and not again to resuscitate. It was done too, in a manner, that left Charles free. He had been attached to the principles of foreign liberalism, that distinguished the

party. But these principles, at least in appearance, were foresworn by him who represented them. So that the party chief lost colour even in that which had been more peculiarly distinguished here, and the want of which was supposed to incapacitate rivals.

. But however great the advantages which the break-up of old parties, with the respective blunders and obstinacies that incapacitated them from office, left to Sir Everard Grimstone, this personage, however astute, seemed not fully prepared to profit by them. His neutral position required that he should conciliate rivals and enemies. But Sir Everard, unfortunately, had his pride and his manners as stiff, as his principles were flexible. Though a mere Quixote, without a Sancho to follow him, he gave himself the airs of an Amadis, and refused even to enter the closet of his sovereign except on a par with the greatest of political chiefs. Although he had every facility for creeping up the back-stairs of office, he would walk boldly up the grand staircase, and force his way through dignitaries and guards, as if he had a ducal influence, and possessed such a following in parliament as duke never had. Instead of which, Sir

Everard had scarcely a seat of his own. Whatever his ability, it was more than overburdened by a character for unpopularity and unsteadiness, and without the scrap of Peel's mantle that fell to his share, it was difficult to ascertain what were the real claims to high office of a man, who not only would grasp it, but professed to knock down rather than set aside his opponents.

The task, therefore, of personally persuading or negotiating with the Liberals, was imposed by Sir Everard upon Charles, who had never contemplated the performance of such a duty. He had, indeed, all the good nature, good temper, and address, requisite for it, but he was not sufficiently hardened or *rusé* for the work of political negotiation. Sir Everard's original plan was to come into power with a set of measures so useful, so popular, so bold, as would have lit up in his favour all the enthusiasm already kindled for Peel, and would thus have carried away by the blast of the popular voice, all the hesitation and opposition that aristocratic or ejected placemen could make.

But unfortunately for Sir Everard, it happens, that those great measures of progress

and reform, that carry a whole people with them, and raise a minister to greatness on the crest of the advancing tide, are not things for the minister, or for any politician to invent or discover in his personal need. They are great national wants, born of great national necessities, thrown forth by circumstances and in crises, of which no man is father, and no man is master. Who invented Catholic Emancipation, or Reform, or Corn-Law Repeal? No man, or no minister. The utmost that they can do is to catch and vault upon them as they rise and pass. No Peel, no Russell, no O'Connell, can invent them, or strike them as a spark for even the most inflammable people. No party, dropping from power after having lived its natural term of office, can invent a new financial scheme, which is to act like an elixir, and renew life all at once for it. No prime minister that has slumbered through five years, can awaken and claim all that mass of allowances and confidences with which he was first enabled to start. No adventurer, who wants place, can grasp, or at least can hold it, on the promise of a panacea. In the state of parties, what Sir Everard might promise to the Radicals, would alarm the more Liberal.

Conservatives ; what might please the Church, would offend either Catholic or Dissenter ; what would flatter the county would alienate the towns. In short, in a moment of such intermingled and confused interests, it was not by any large or loud promises, or by clap-trap of any kind, that ascendancy could be gained, but on the contrary, by silence, and smoothness, and comprehensiveness, and oiliness, and plausibility,—by a line of conduct, in short, which a popular and amiable man might pursue, but which Sir Everard was the least capable man in all England to accomplish.

That wily candidate for office had promised the Radicals, if he attained it, to carry reform and economy at home, to a degree that would amply content them ; and yet he hoped to persuade at the same time the more Conservative of the Whigs, that he was the safest of ministers, would preserve establishments in all efficiency, and not disarm government in the country by the impoverishment of their resources. Charles was truly to be pitied, coming as the envoy of such a personage to the magnates of his former party. He was, indeed, received by them personally with the greatest courtesy. He had been a favourite

of theirs, had been neglected and ill-used. But still they evidently felt and conveyed to him their opinion, that he ought to have suffered the extremity of contumely and neglect, and like a martyr have still remained unflinching and attached to that banner, which they honoured by holding. No priest, in fact, of Egyptian mysteries, or High-Catholic creed, could be more intolerant than they, or more supremely contemptuous of all who professed Liberalism, yet who called in question their right to represent, administer, and dole it out. Talk of the pride of birth, the pride of wealth, the pride of place, none of these are so rigid as the pride of hereditary politics. The idea that such men could ever amalgamate with Radicals was palpably absurd. They would never hear of Cobden, but as a boy to hold a censer behind the officiating priest. They would take the proudest politician of Manchester, and think they had amply conciliated and rewarded him, by clothing him in the blue and buff livery of an errand boy.

Charles pleaded that too great an unanimity, too close a *solidarité*, as the French say, between the members of the Liberal party, would merely prove their ruin; that the best and most sagacious of ministers would at times

commit themselves to an act or an opinion, which, the most irrefragable wisdom one day, becomes the most insupportable imprudence the next. A political party was thus like an army, which must consent for its own safety to sacrifice at times general and officers, and present a new front with new chiefs, when necessity, or alliance, or combination demanded it. A party now kept the ascendant by the support of popular opinion, and if one man of the Liberal party happened to obtain more of its confidence than another, the party should accept him for leader, unless it would prefer perishing, and losing power from personal attachment to another, whom the turn of fortune's wheel, rather than his own demerits, had unfitted. In this, Charles gave utterance to Sir Everard's principles, rather than to his own; for however he admitted their truth, he remained attached to that old feudal principle of personal fidelity, and to the old gentlemanly one of losing with honour rather than winning by address.

Charles, as the preacher of a doctrine that he did not believe, was not successful. The attempt to modify the principles of party for his own immediate benefit, was met with irony by some; others refused to have aught to do

which was the spring of his energies. Fortune is made to turn her back upon him decidedly. Honour and respect are withdrawn. It is a disrobing previous to execution.

Charles Delmer felt himself thus treated by the stern and merciless hands of fate, as he returned after his last futile effort at attaining what had been the ambition of his life. Had that ambition been gratified for even no long space of time, could he have had the opportunity of showing what his worth and his powers were in such a position, could he have assumed rank among those Englishmen who have sat in cabinets,—taken and joined council for the conduct of a great nation,—this would have satisfied him, even though no assured prosperity or affluence followed. There is a satisfaction in having run a career and attained the goal, even although the prize be but a perishable and unsubstantial gain. But to be tripped up in the race, to fall the maimed and unnoticed victim of a struggle scarcely commenced, to sink into oblivion, or be remembered but as the man of high pretensions and no achievements, was bitter.

His health collapsed with his hopes, and gave way when the excitement of exertion was

over. His mother, accustomed to see these fits of marasma befall him, was alarmed at the depth and continuance of the present, to which she saw no term, for where then was the room for hope? Charles's was a shipwrecked life; ambition, profession, public aim, private happiness, all missed. And it was her doing. She it was who had tasked her son to strive for the high prizes, which it requires a power and a spirit of iron, proof against all obstacles and all reverses, to struggle for. All that was essential might have been attained in far humbler paths. But she would have him soar, and the punishment of her pride was to be witness of his fall. Mrs. Delmer's looks, though the bitterness of her feelings beneath were concealed, and her ejaculations, briefly as they were cut short, expressed fully enough to Charles the nature and cause of her thoughts.

"Calm yourself, good mother," exclaimed he; "we have both obeyed the impulse and fulfilled the fate given and allotted to us. If I have fallen short, it has not been by crime, or dishonour, or even want of effort. Where, then, is there cause of self-reproach?"

"Alas, Charles!" said Mrs. Delmer, "I sometimes accuse myself, but I still more often

accuse the world, and I dare at times, not indeed accuse, but raise a question to Providence. How is it that talents are bestowed and aspirations,—all the elements and impulse given for the attainment of a manifest object,—and yet obstacles come at the moment of attainment, and all is disappointment and loss?"

"How many flowers open upon yon apple-tree, and how few fruits are formed? Hundreds of men are formed for the accomplishment of what one is destined to perform."

"The ninety-nine were born, then, to perish?"

"The whole hundred were born for that."

"But the ninety-nine are to perish without ever attaining that for which they were fitted."

"It is of little consequence who does what is to be done. The essential is, not to have thrown away opportunities and faculties."

"Yet to see the coarse, the selfish, and the narrow-minded, called to influence and direct the affairs of a great country, instead of the intellectual, the gifted, the highly informed!"

"And after all to see them do it as well!"

"Of what use, then, is genius, Charles?"

And for what purpose was high intellect given?"

"Certainly not for place, dear mother. The time has past, at least for England, when a statesman in parliament or power could invent or originate anything new, great, or grand, in politics. They have not time, have not power, have not, in fine, the mission for any such thing. Genius, or intelligence for public affairs, is better placed in any one member of the unemployed public, where a good or great idea, boldly struck forth, will shine and have its influence. It is not so much one mind of the public, as the public mind itself—that great aggregation, which now first feels and then makes known its wants, its griefs, its aspirations, and its ideas. As to ministers and statesmen, they have but to take up the ideas which the public has struck forth and rendered prominent. Numas and Solons are no longer to be sought on a throne, or even in a cabinet. They are to be looked for in some obscure closet, with pen in hand. It is the Bentham and the Livingstones that give ideas to the world. It is the Jacksons and the Peels that work them."

"Better, then, be a bookworm and a philo-

sopher, than a man of the world, and of address, the wit of society, the orator of parliament. You will never persuade me of this, Charles. Your bookworm and dreamer may be hid in any quadrangle of a college, in any pigeon-hole of a London journal, but a man who knows his fellows and can make use of them, and win respect and obedience from them, these are the men to govern, to get and to keep eminence, to be the knights of the present day, when the tournament and the combat are fought in the drawing-room and the council-chamber. No, Charles, preach as you will, you will never persuade me that greatness is the attribute of a *cuisse*, and not that of a statesman and a courtier. But here is Mr. Jacobi," added Mrs. Delmer, "come to tell us, I hope, that political genius was not made to generate ideas in a garret, whilst political mediocrity fattens on them in office."

"I have not seen Jacobi this month."

"No, Delmer, I would not obtrude even upon your thoughts, full as they were of the secrets of one whom I neither respect nor love. But now I am come to tell you that Tories can do what Whigs cannot, viz. honour

talent, and allow it to come in upon a fair equality with rank."

"You a minister!"

"Even so."

"What?"

"——."

"Well, I honour Lord Knowsley for the act; yet what other could he do?"

"Plenty of other, as you call it,—pleaded the prejudice of his party, the pretended reluctance of his sovereign,—all the excuses, in fine, which the Whigs would have found, plenty of blackberries, to thrust a man like me into the second rank. Whereas a great Lord and first Lord declared at once, in despite of all obstacles, to stall his steed with that of —— Jacobi. This alone is a reform of the cabinet. I told you the Tories were the only true reformers. But I come to bring you comfort. What we attempt is nothing less than the impossible. We shall do it bravely,—carry everything by storm. But we know that a new party cannot thus establish itself even on the breach that it has carried. We must retreat, to mount again to the assault, not lacking hope of success."

"And what of all this?"

"Why, that as the Whigs are as defunct as Walpole's wig, and as incapable of mustering a majority, you have a fair chance in any of those scores of combinations to which liberals are reduced in order to live."

"Thanks, Jacobi," said Charles, with a grim smile, "but I feel myself engaged to quite another combination than any of the score."

"Pooh, pooh, man! Consider what pleasure and excitement await you. Those targets for your wit, the Tories in power,—those envious owls, the Whigs, flung from their pride of place pell-mell upon the opposition benches, where your fast official or your dull magnate is no more than any other mortal, and whence a smart hit or a home retort from Charles Delmer, will be more telling than the solemn foolery of official emptiness."

"My dear Jacobi, I have outlived the thirst of mere personal distinction."

"Well, call it patriotism, or public duty, anything you like, provided it puts you on your legs, and sets in full activity all that is intellectual and powerful within you."

"The next few sessions will indeed offer a glorious scramble," said Charles, "but I shall not engage in it. Had I strength I scarcely

know where I am. And that is now my sole subject of regret."

"You surely would not confess yourself snubbed to death by those mighty men, who first neglect you and then cut you for resenting it,—who flay their victims, and then sacrifice them for writhing under it."

"I enlisted in the aristocratic regiment," said Charles, "and regret I did not go on quietly with it."

"You will persist in dreaming out the old dreams, and worshipping the old idols of the last century. You will be true, Delmer, to the owl-worship of the Athenians. Why will you suppose divinity and power to reside in a class, which have dwindled into common mortals, and who have no power left save that of arrogance. If you want to be a social reformer,—to reform what is most wanting,—you must turn Tory. We are fifty years in advance of the Whigs; we are immeasurably nearer to the people, and capable of satisfying and advancing them."

"I dare say you will outbid our aristocrats," said Charles, "but it will be of no avail. You are tied to the clods, and can never win the confidence of the towns."

"Surely, then, the Whigs cannot."

"The Whigs, indeed, still less. But the towns will have a party or parties, and strong ones. And if his disciples knew as well as Peel himself how to conciliate them—"

"Ay, but the leaven of aristocracy, the love of lords, and church fanaticism, unfit them for a middle-class party, even more than the Whigs. Still, such reformers as Sir Everard might procure them the support of the thorough liberals, such men as you the respect of the more independent Whigs, and with judgment, Charles, I do not see why a joint-stock middle party might not grasp power, and achieve great things. It is worth thinking of, and living for."

"And you can turn aside from your own triumph, Jacobi, to look out for mine. No, if that day comes, it will prove the grandeur of such men as Lord Poyntz and his father. And sincerely do I hope for Poyntz's success, knowing that he alone can give Naomi Workworth what she deserves,—a title."

"What has his lordship done, that you should wave everything in his favour, Charles?"

"Why should I have thrust my weak and hopeless self between two beings born to

affluence, eminence, and each other. Had I followed your advice, Jacobi, what would have been my remorse, to have engaged her affections, perhaps, and tied them to the fortune of a dying man."

"It is nothing but your own eternal misgivings, Charles, that have produced your physical prostration. You could have lived for ever upon happiness and hope."

"Seemed to live! The flame would have burned brighter and quicker—the sooner to be extinguished."

It was not in the power of even Jacobi to cheer the mortal despondency of his friend. He returned as often as unceasing application to business would permit, and he found himself almost the sole crosser of the sick man's threshold. The mighty men of his own old party, who had fallen by their own dissensions, and who had stupidly and carelessly made way for the ascendancy of their arch-enemy, were angry with themselves and with every one else, especially with those who, like Delmer, sought to save the liberal cause, and erect the liberal standard with other than the old Whig hands. Having thus forfeited the attachment of his old friends, he had not yet

acquired the friendship of the new. Even in health he would have been for a time in an isolated world, and would have felt with keenness what this means in a country where all depends upon connexion and clique, and where a party is a dissected mass, of which the whole is valuable and intelligible, but any fragment of it a useless and unmeaning thing.

Still Charles read and heard enough to see how much what is called liberalism had lost ground within twenty years in the minds of the English public. In 1830 who would have tolerated a Tory ministry or a French autocrat, — would have seen a Palmerston cease to represent English policy abroad, and an Aberdeen take up that sceptre? Now all politicians and politics seemed alike. Lord John and Lord Knowsley seemed puppets taken out of the same box. The *Times*, that great organ both of English eagerness and English *nonchalance*, asked for Lord Knowsley fair play, and for Jacobi admiration, which, indeed, none seemed eager to refuse. So sick was every one of the old and humdrum in politics, and so ready was every one to be pleased with the new, if the new would be but adroit, amusing, and respectable.

Poor Charles saw in this marked contempt and indifference of the public for all parties, a decay and dereliction of principle—great but natural mistake on his part—which saddened him.

Jacobi begged him not to mistake a disbelief in Whiggism for faithlessness to virtue. As to ultra-liberals, they had kicked up their heels and brayed throughout all Europe in so very asinine a manner, and to so very little purpose, that there was little marvel if even the wiser fraternity of ultra-liberals in England suffered by the depreciation of their brethren abroad.

Charles, however, in his despondent humour, thought he saw the days of his youth return, when dull Toryism was the lord of the ascendant, and when the progress of the world and the influence of talent were arrested by the numerical and iron struggle of one physical force against another, which occupied the interest and filled the annals of the time.

The comfort was not allowed to Charles to see public life vanish silently from him, and without an effort or a farewell on his part. Circumstances called upon him for either hopeful adhesion or lasting adieu. Lord Knowsley,

of course, was about to try the result of a general election. It was necessary to stand for the division of the county, or under some pretext withdraw. Charles had long determined not to find a seat by Miss Worksworth's influence. He had cast about for another. But effort and canvass were required. It was necessary for Naomi to know his resolve; yet there was a delicacy in asking. The Poyntzett family requested and had obtained her support for two members in their interest, on the condition that both would vote against any re-establishment of the corn-law, and that the Poyntzett interest would not be employed against George Pevensey, in Shuttlefield. All this, however, was in case that Mr. Delmer would not stand. If he determined to do so, Miss Worksworth was prepared to show no abatement of zeal in his behalf. This was signified to him in the kindest and most delicate manner, but it only strengthened his resolve to shake off the weight of patronage and politics at once.

Charles consequently devoted his remaining strength to draw up an address to his constituents. It was touching—it was sad! In expressing his gratitude to them, he poured

forth what he truly felt of that feeling to her who had inspired their choice. In declining the proud position in which their kindness had placed him, and waving his claim to a renewal of their confidence, he admitted that failing health was one cause of his resolve. He declared, however, that it was not his only motive: a consciousness that even in health he could be no longer useful,—could no longer pursue that path, and accomplish those purposes which he had meditated and prepared;—and that the new state of parties, of principles, and of men, was such that he at least had quite lost sight of the pole-star of politics, and should be at a loss, even if in command of a bark, how or whither to steer. Public life, he said, had become a *mélée* in which he no longer knew his friends from his enemies, nor the light of the port from which he steered from the light of the rocks which he was to avoid. Yet it was hard, after having spent youth, and wasted thought and life in search of public eminence and public honour, to leave both within reach, and yet ungrasped.

There was much of this address too personal to himself, and too deeply fraught with feeling, for Charles ever to have allowed to

issue from him. His careful pen would have erased and altered, till effusion of feeling had become the expression of decorous, polished, and dignified resignation.

But Charles's farewell address was not destined to recruit the columns of the provincial journal for which it was intended. His anxious mother had tried to divert from a task which evidently fevered, fretted, and exhausted him. She saw his midnight lamp lighting his anxiety and his labour; but what was her fear to see in morning light the lamp still burning. She broke in upon the overwrought writer: his form had bent over his work, his chest rested on the table, and his bowed head, where the premature grey had already come to mar the glossy texture of his hair, had fallen down upon his hand. The mother touched her darling son upon the shoulder; but he moved and answered not. The breath of life had departed, whilst his hand was severing that of his political existence.

CHAPTER X.

GREAT was the amazement, and excitement, and jubilation, and execration, when it was announced that Lord Knowsley had not only been offered the reins of government, but had accepted them. Nowhere was the sensation greater than in Poyntztett and Shuttlefield. There would be new elections, new combinations. The party that held office would be obliged to take new ground. There was everything to fear and to hope; and instead of the dull game that politics had been for a year or two, they, of a sudden, became an interesting and inspiring one. To persons of any intelligence it was evident indeed, that the game for which town and country had been long playing, was irrevocably won by the former. It was, nevertheless, quite uncertain whether the victors or the vanquished were to profit by the results of the battle.

There had been a solemn reconciliation between Poyntz and Shuttlefield. The Duke had accomplished the first requisites towards recovering respect. He had put order in his affairs, got rid of incumbrances, sold unprofitable property, revised his rent-roll, and, in the midst of the depreciation of farming power, had actually raised farmers' rents. Hospitality was restored at the ducal manor; not hospitality of a brilliant or expensive kind, but enough to restore the residents to the place. There was smoke once more in its chimnies, silks on its terraces, equipages at its classic portico. Wise conciliation had been used towards Shuttlefield, room given for its extension, and facilities to its sanatory commission. The forest paths were no longer so rigidly closed, nor the preserves so inveterately watched. Trespasses were overlooked, prosecution and condemnation for that and for poaching confined to flagrant instances. Young Lord Poyntz was affable; and, as old and exaggerated Toryism disappeared from the vicinity of the town, so at the same time old ultra-radicalism and democracy dwindled within. There was work to be done, and plenty. Ned Strike was silent; even Thaddeus was chop-fallen;

and George Pevensey found that he himself was, at the verge of democracy and progress, no greater depth beyond him. They were halcyon times in the lower world of politics, whatever had produced the calm.

But the great change as well as the great event in Shuttlefield, was the rise and progress of Mr. Plynlimon, who had cast off the chrysalis state, that of agent for Miss Workworth, and who had come forth as the lord of the railway, which proved the great channel of influence and patronage, as well as of locomotion, in that part of the country. It was incredible the number of persons whom this mushroom magnate was able to oblige. He who had a little money, besought him for shares; he who had none, for employ; he who traded, for a lift or a job in that in which he dealt. The very squires had a compliment to ask of Plynlimon, and he, in turn, an obligation to confer. Talk of Whig or Tory, or the little they could give, the petty boons in which they dealt; what were they in comparison with the new power, which dispensed wealth, and all other earthly good, with a hand against which aristocratic or private patronage could not, in the locality, compete? Then

there was not only his favour to expect, but his enmity to fear. In the credit giving and taking community of England, there is no knowing of whom we may have need—whose hostility may prove fatal, whose good word may be valuable. And it is inconceivable the tyranny and servility, the hatred and dissimulation that comes of it. In the old state of employ and manufacturing influence, the man who displeased, or was too independent for one master, found refuge or appreciation with another. But now, when joint-stock capitalists delegate their authority to one man, one overseer, who has but to show economy and discipline as the result of his management, or who, perhaps, is too powerful to need the showing of either, in order to consolidate his power, the grinding and the tyranny of those in employ by those in authority is far more rigid and intolerable. There have been strikes against masters in the olden times, but a general rebellion against companies will, at no distant period, be a much more serious source of trouble, and even of bloodshed. Thus our poor friend, Thaddæus, found it difficult to live; yet he postponed his purpose to emigrate, he said, till his hour of vengeance was come. On the other hand, the

g fellow, whom we have called Epi-
wound and flattered himself into an
place, and flung aside the more in-
and independent who scorn to get
-bearers and as spies, as ready to do
as the freeman's work.

was not merely the poor who were
bow their necks before Mr. Plyn-
w supremacy. Mr. Omichund him-
is own old Tory royalty evaporate.
an Jukes must evidently cede the
navor, either to Mr. Plynlimon him-
is nominee. All that Plynlimon
as to see whether Poyntztett would
im or not. If the Duke of Arming-
take him by the hand, and treat
lily, in that case, Mr. Plynlimon
r much and suffer much for the sup-
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Tory standard against the Duke, as
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nservative and a Free Trader, in
th his Grace.

ike and Lord Poyntz were sorely
know how to deal with this sud-
len mass of arrogance. Of the man

they could not but form a very bad opinion, since, when in the employ of Miss Worksworth, and possessed of her confidence, he had made use of that position to misrepresent her fortune and condition to Lord Poyntz, insinuating rather than asserting, that both were insecure, and that by the advancement of facts which had proved utterly false. For Miss Worksworth had prevailed upon George Pevensy to undertake the management of the manufacturing and mercantile portion of her property, and sufficient had been extricated from Plynlimon's hands to prove him to be as malignant as he was dishonest. Lord Poyntz, indeed, on one occasion, had indignantly reproached him with the calumny, which Plynlimon had represented as an anxiety on his part for the true interest of a great house, which were so much more important than the monied reputation of a child.

Mr. Plynlimon had, however, since then plainly manifested another very obvious motive for such insinuation on his part, inasmuch as he had the boldness, or the madness, to profess himself a suitor to Miss Worksworth's hand. Two years back, her smile of contempt would have been crushing; but she had seen enough

of her own affairs to feel how advisable it would be to unravel the business connexion of the Worksworth property with its quondam agent, without hostility, or breach, or resentment. And she had seen enough of the world to enable her to give not the least encouragement, or pay even the least attention to such a suit as that of Plynlimon's, and to inflict this contempt upon him, without giving him the least pretext for a grievance. She even succeeded in making him agree without delay, and consent to the transfer of accounts and responsibility, in some degree, to the man whom he, Plynlimon, most hated, viz. George Pevensey.

Miss Worksworth's new science of worldliness had indeed a double task to perform, in obliging her to conceal not only her own disgust, but the indignation of Pevensey, who, as he dived into accounts, analyzed purchases and sales, sought explanation of transactions, saw enough not only to create suspicion, but to raise grounds of serious accusation. Plynlimon stood on very high ground. When urged on one or two points, he had shown a magnanimity that had placed him beyond reproach, paying up sums apparently lost by his gratuitously taking charge of another's interests, with a chivalrous

generosity, that silenced all other complaints of the same nature, and covered a world of irregularities.

In the midst of these cares and managements, a note from Mr. Jacobi brought the sad tidings of the death of Charles Delmer. The same intelligent friend had led her long since to expect no more hopeful prolongation of an existence, that had commanded so much of her admiration, and had been blended with so many of her dreams. Her feelings towards him, indeed, whatever they might once have been, was but part of a former phase of existence, and a state of sentiment, and of worldly views, out of which she had completely grown. Her airy dreams had been the hallucinations of the girl, and although the affections and attachments formed then, were still dear, still cherished and respected, they were so as by-gone things. The first flower of the heart, as we believe of the garden, are, however delicate and prized, universally destined to perish, as buds, and no more, losing the strength to ripen into maturity and fruit. In general, those flowers of the heart come so early, as to be like an infantine and almost unnoticed disappointment. When circumstances, or culture,

however, delay the development, as in the case of Naomi, the pain which they cause, and the bitterness which they create, are great, and leave a deep and lasting impression on the character, which they modify and even mature. Naomi was a girl when she admired Delmer; she became at once a woman, and almost a woman of the world, in ceasing to do so.

Still the fate of poor Charles was a blow deeply felt. However foolish, her young hopes were still kindled at that shrine, her young admiration of mankind and man's talents, independent of every softer affection, was lit up by his reputation and his name,—and to see both pass away like a burnt-up scroll, leaving nothing behind it, not even a reputation beyond the memory of a few intimate friends, was one of those terribly truthful and appalling revelations of life, which it is difficult to get over. The caution, which she could not explain, the coldness, which she could not fathom, were now seen too clearly as the result of his past forebodings. The indecisive and apparent weakness of his character, which had alienated her incipient attachment, and changed it almost into resentment and contempt, were but the doubts which the spirit had of the strength of

the frame in which it worked. Perhaps the ingratitude of political friends, joined with his own precarious fortune, had aggravated his ill. She, however, had not been wanting in encouragement or disinterestedness. She had the consolation, at least, of her generosity ; and she was proud of having felt and acted in the very teeth of worldliness and prudence, ere worldliness and prudence had come to be the atmosphere in which she lived.

Few persons were more sincerely lamented, and by those of all parties, than Charles Delmer. His life, character, and genius, had silenced malignity and hatred, even before his fate had done so. And yet no party lost any time in putting itself forward to inherit his spoils, and profit by his disappearance. None loved him more than Jacobi, and yet Jacobi turned aside from his friendly grief, to hope that Miss Worksworth would not continue the support which she had held out to him, to the ungrateful Whigs, who had slain him. The Earl of Mertons refused to make any solicitation, but Larment and the busy men of his party, were soon in the field, recommending candidates, hinting advantages, and seeking to circumvent the interests or the vanity of

the lady patroness. The candidate proposed by these active men, was the son of a noble family, of no distinct profession, whom she had met at Mertons, and who had treated her with the ineffable arrogance of his family and his party; so that it needed not the incentive of avenging poor Charles Delmer's neglect, to steel Naomi's heart against the Whigs. Besides, her whole leanings were towards Poyntzstett, which had become on its part most assiduous to her. Not a week passed without Lord Poyntz being at Highfield's, nor did so much time pass without Naomi having some business of importance with the Duke himself. And the Duke had such a monomania of politics, that there were no concerns which he did not mix up with them, and refer to them. The electoral management of town and county was, then, the uppermost thought with him,—so violent and heartfelt indeed, that Naomi, though political and electoral matters had ceased to interest for themselves, very willingly gave all the influence she possessed, at least in the county, to Poyntzstett. When proofs of this agreement appeared, which of course they soon did, they were coupled with the frequent visits of their lordships, and Lord Poyntz was

universally set down and recognised as a suitor to Miss Worksworth's hand and fortune.

Nor can it be said, that in this people were mistaken. Since the death of Charles Delmer, whose attachment and solicitude had inspired the young Earl with proud caution, he flung off the hesitation which had formerly marked his conduct. Since Naomi herself had mingled in the world, and assumed not only its ways, but its feelings, she was much more prized, much more appreciated at Poyntzstett. And having formerly been of the society of the celestials, and broken away from them, was an accident, or accomplishment, or distinction, working decidedly in her favour. Lord Poyntz could never have resolved to marry a wife without the prejudices and ideas of his class ; and these seemed now quite as strong in Naomi as if she had been born to them. As to the present Duke, he had none, or few, of the prejudices of birth, and seemed to think, or he learnt to say, that a resuscitation of the old Poyntz property by the influence of mercantile wealth, was more desirable than even doing it by aristocratic connexion, as the family would command infinitely more respect, and excite more sympathy in those influential classes,

on whose support political influence and greatness in England now mainly depended.

Such was the state of Miss Worksworth's prospects and relations, when she moved once more to London, to join in that great drama played for three or four months of every year, by those personages of the empire who are influential or eminent in any respect. Naomi came no longer there as a girl under the tutelage of a fashionable dame, to beg an access to society. She was woman enough to occupy an allowed position, of course guarded according to the laws of *bienseance*, but not the less asserting possession of her own will and independence.

It was an exciting moment. New men, the almost forgotten representatives of the Tory party, had seized power, to the inexplicable delight of the celestials, and a crowd of old mutineers of by-gone courts and influences. Would they keep it? would they not? That was the chief and the sole thought of the public who watched them, as of the chief who led them. There was really very little anxiety about principles, or about the great cause of the ten years' struggle. People's minds were pretty well at rest on that point; and the

squires knew they could no more raise a private revenue for themselves out of the price of bread and meat, as the people knew they would not pay it. There remained, therefore, but the personal question, a question of contest and address, which was looked on much as the Cowes regatta, or the Epsom race might be contemplated, more for the interest and the accidents of the struggle, than for the value of the prize.

No one took this thorough English view of the question more completely than Lord Knowsley. His lordship was far more of a sportsman than a politician, had far more game in him than principle, and far more of the pride and determination to win, than any set purpose, high or low, as to the use which he should make of victory. He did not want money. Of both it and rank he had beyond the possibility of desiring more. Power he did not ambition for itself, for he was lazy, and had not a spice or tone of either a Polignac or a Cobden; that is, he cared for neither progress nor reaction. He did not want to restore aristocracy, or crush democracy. However Tory, he had none of those high-flying words with which new ministers set out, and which they

invariably end by dropping them into the mire. He was an Englishman quite prepared to take things as they were; and he was infinitely more amused than elated at finding himself minister against the wishes, purposes, and majority of both parliament and people, against the tendencies of the court, against the cause and necessities of the times, against all odds, and all chances. That he was in at all, was a *bizarrerie* of representative government, an exception, a phenomenon, an irregularity. Of all this he was perfectly aware; but this never struck even the suspicions of the good people behind him. They imagined themselves wafted to power by a natural ebb of the great tide, and they meditated, according as public or private interests predominated with them, to make the utmost of it, both for the restoration of their privileges and advantages, and for the perpetuation of their power. On the first occasion, Lord Knowsley had told them that such hopes were mere moonshine, but he could not repeat so unwelcome and uncourteous a truth. He could not lead fanatics, and at the same time open their eyes to sober truth. This time, therefore, he consented to *hurler avec les loups*, and to do this with

satisfaction, he confined himself to a sporting view of the entire struggle. He was determined to win if he could, and to take all the pains to win, caring little how he marred, sunk, or compromised himself by the efforts, or the sacrifices that he made. It was in this spirit that he had pulled on the ministerial mantle, forgetful both that he himself rode the horse or steered the boat, and that there was far greater interests at stake, and far greater consequences to follow, than the victory of Lord Knowsley, and the triumph of his new and juvenile party.

The truth was, that even the triumph of Lord Knowsley, had he achieved it, would have been futile. The only object worth an effort, in such a situation, would have been to have resuscitated, reconciled, and rallied the separate limbs of the Tory party, by bringing both in harmony with the age, and on a level with its requirements ; but that required a more grave, more profound, more philosophic, more active, and influential chief than Lord Knowsley. All English parties have indeed foundered of late years, for want of that most difficult of all things to find,—a chief. At the present moment of reaction, in fear and disgust of demagoguery,

both in Ireland and at home, there were few even Whig magnates, few great commercial grandees, that had not Conservative leanings and misgivings. There was not a layer of society, in which a great and able Tory chief might not have reconciled followers and friends. But Lord Knowsley, if he knew how to set about it, cared not. At least, he cared for no more than momentary triumph, leaving the great task of a great party-leader in England, such as was completely open to him, altogether untried. No one saw this more clearly than Jacobi, who however held his tongue, and dived into the studies and archives of the unfathomable information of his office, to master that full specialty of knowledge, which, after all, gives the most secure and irrefragable claim to place.

Miss Worksworth found she had made decided and inveterate enemies of the celestials. However discreet a silence she had observed as to the cause of her abruptly breaking from them, and however willing to continue grateful for their past kindness and condescension, they refused to receive any conciliation of the kind. They had taken her by the hand and honoured her, as they had done few ; and she had broken

off from them, slighted their counsels, forsworn their exclusiveness, wandered back to old friends and acquaintances of doubtful caste, and strange gentility. She aspired to be a duchess, not only without their countenance and aid, but even in their despite. Accordingly, every social battery was opened against her, and every means resorted to, to turn Lord Poyntz from an alliance to which he seemed to have made up his mind.

There was a time when high Toryism and fashion united would have crushed with their united enmity any one, who stood not upon a very sure foundation. But Toryism, however it has kept its ascendancy in the country, no longer rules even the west end of the metropolis; and not even the temporary re-conquest of the beloved Household, could restore to the great leaders their former supremacy. But malignity is equally at the service of the as of the powerful, and of course more unsparingly by the former. presented the heiress of the of the most self a lover of Charles

of a few months, and the prospect of a ducal coronet, had made her desert him and leave him to die, in order to pursue the dream of ambition. Count Fascine, who had a tongue, which could be mischievous as well as amusing, had his friend St. Benoît to revenge, and he did so by the composition of a romance, of which Naomi was the heroine, St. Benoît the victim, and of which the incidents and catastrophe were of the French school of extravagance.

Meantime, the innocent victim of their malice was congratulating herself on going through the world without making an enemy,—so mild, and forbearing, and generous, and humble did she imagine herself to be. Yet was she possessed of that keen vision which discovers the truth through the mist of self-delusion, she would have found that she was doing little else for two or three years than making enemies. She had begun by turning her back on her mercantile connexions, and the religious associations of her family. This was pride and profanation, which not one of her friends and relatives pardoned. Then she had been taken with enthusiasm for a young and eloquent patriot, which led her to worship

the gentle and enlightened liberalism of the Whigs. Mistaken in her hero, and disenchanted with her dream, she regarded politics as a speculation or a business, or at most a career of ambition, and was considered to have rallied to the Tories from an empty love of fashion, and ardour for distinction,—another host of enemies having sprung up behind her, whilst before her no friendship had been kindled, no connexion secured. She was actually going through life without making a friend, or securing a support. She neither cultivated, nor cared for either, fondly imagining that such things sprung up as fruit does in a tropical climate, from the beauty of the atmosphere, and the exuberance of the soil. And now with all her wealth, all her beauty, all her intelligence and address, of which she had a very fair portion, she was condemned, and threatened with all kinds of misfortune and disappointments, from a combination of enemies and envies, not one of which she could have suspected or foreseen.

CHAPTER XI.

AMONGST the batch of new actors which a London season always produces on its boards, came this time the new and unexpected person of Mr. Plynlimon. Death had left a small borough vacant, which was eminently purchasable, but which no one cared to expend money in, with the prospect of a break-up of party and a new election. Mr. Plynlimon contrived to slip in for it, not so much by lavish bribery as unbounded promises. He felt pretty sure of Shuttlefield at a general election, but he required some time to form alliances and make friends, which even a short session would do. His coquetry with the Duke of Armington had not produced the effect desired. His Grace saw through the speciousness of Mr. Plynlimon, and believed neither

in his honesty, his ability, nor even in his wealth. Plynlimon was a bubble, that the Duke preferred allowing to float by.

Plynlimon, therefore, flung up his cap for Protection, or for the party of the Protectionists, without protection. The squires of the time rapturously hailed every defection to them from mercantile ranks. And although the personages of such defections were almost infallibly cracked, either in brain, fortune, or position, still they were welcomed with a fervour and an enthusiasm well calculated of itself to turn the head of men like Plynlimon. The aristocracy of wealth are in all countries, we know, as conservative as is consistent with their own development, and quite ready to ally with, and to play second fiddle to, the aristocracy of land, when the latter will condescend to admit the alliance. The old aristocracy, however, never do condescend at the right moment, and never conciliate in the right thing. The consequence in France has been, that the aristocracy of wealth has completely subverted and destroyed the aristocracy of land and birth. The consequence in England has been milder; the aristocracy of wealth has formed a party of itself—a party of liberal

conservatives, in contradistinction to the landed party of superannuated conservatism, and has not only succeeded in establishing this new party, but has drawn over to it the greater number of the more sensible and capable amongst the scions and followers of the aristocracy of birth. Had Peel lived he would have completed this revolution. His disciples have made more progress with it than was first expected of them. And the Duke of Armington felt, that a man of his birth and position, placing himself at the head of such a party, and remaining firm to all those principles which must attract and rally the commercial aristocracy, could not fail to form, as the commencement, a strong liberal Tory party, but, in the end, come to comprise the whole Conservative side, the resistance of the squires being neutralized by it, if not carried away.

This was the difference between the Duke of Armington and Jacobi;—the former took the practical view, such as we have described; but Jacobi was sentimental. He hoped to revive not any new Conservatism of wealth and commerce overriding that of land, or on a par with it. He abhorred the Venetian

constitution. He, on the contrary, thought that the feudal and the noble element must be preserved, and the influence of government and of constitutional ascendancy secured to those who inherited and cherished those high and noble sentiments.

Jacobi agreed with the French in thinking the *hommes d'argent* incapable of governing, of making great efforts and great sacrifices. In this he was quite wrong. There was quite as much chivalry in the counting-house of the Venetian merchant as in that of any feudal baron. And whether there was or not, the only rational and feasible rule of politics at the present day, or indeed in any day, is to take things as they are, and direct them, and make the best of them, instead of vainly seeking to revive and reconstruct old rotten foundations for the modern edifices of government.

Such men as Plynlimon, however, worshipped, as the concentration of all power, that old territorial Tory party, which still preserved all the pride, and which sought the recovery of authority with all the energy of passion and resentment claiming its own. His ambition was not that he should be thanked

and welcomed, it was that he should be received as a companion, flattered as a guest, and accepted as a host. The rubbing of his skirts to great men so elated Plynlimon, that he lost his centre of gravity, made himself the fogleman of party when he might have remained a tranquil member of it, and became so much an object of ridicule, as to take from his character as a man of shrewdness and solidity.

Plynlimon no sooner found himself on the vantage ground of the Tory benches of the House of Commons, than his impulse was to taunt the Liberals of his class on the other side of the House with every rudeness and familiarity. They, who looked upon him as a deserter and a mountebank, refused to reply. But he was still potent authority for impudence, for contradiction, and bold assertion on such matters as he was supposed more especially to understand.

No one did Plynlimon bring out and challenge so pointedly and perseveringly as Pevensey. The latter calmly but determinately declined the antagonism, and addressing himself always to things, not persons, slowly but steadily worked his way with a perceptible

- and unambitious progress. Radical members too soon despair of making an impression upon, or making themselves heard with favour in the House itself. They are, therefore, apt to speak for out of doors, and aim at ingratiating themselves with extra-parliamentary influences, instead of addressing the assembly itself. It is hard work, certainly, to preach liberalism to squires and economy to officials; but it is impossible for an orator to have either eloquence or success in addressing an assembly which he commences by despising, and disposing of.

The Duke of Armington was busied with the hereditary industry of his house, in getting together a political party; no longer indeed by purchasing boroughs, as his ancestors had done, but in angling for loose fish amongst the members whom the wisdom of constituencies had chosen. There are so many of these legislators who know not before which saint to bow. There were some threescore of Irishmen, quite frantic at being called mummers, whilst their bishops were forbidden to call themselves lords. Lord Armington smoothed down the ruffled plumage of a number of them, shook hands with their prelates, and promised coun-

tenance to themselves. It was a capital nucleus of an army,—the Irish body-guard in brass armour. Then there was Sir Everard's recruits, and tricolor standard. He wanted a Radical name of ability amongst the officers, and he besought Naomi to enlist Pevensey for him, if it could be done. But Pevensey shook his head, and looked far more pained than flattered.

He had no wish for place, he said; at least he would never reach it by enlisting in an amphibious party.

"Is there a ministerial combination possible," asked Lord Poyntz of him, "which is ready or able to do more for the popular cause?"

"I don't inquire after possible combinations," said Pevensey, "if I did, I should be lost in personal ambition and intrigue."

"Nay, you must be a man of transcendent genius if you are to achieve any great political act alone, without joining party, or without accepting place."

"Very true, there is little to be done—little more than the ventilation and advancement of ideas; but even this is better than for the

mass of the people to put on your aristocratic liveries."

"Aristocratic, Mr. Pevensey," said Lord Poyntz: "are you sure that it is not a word—a mere word, without an idea, against which your bile rises?"

Pevensey answered by a gesture, which seemed to say he contemplated an idea fully answering the word.

"Are you an enemy of wealth, Mr. Pevensey? What is a country without it? And that country must be without it, which will deny it accommodation or influence."

"I am no communist," said Pevensey, "and no foe of wealth."

"But wealth, with the respect, learning, power, and influence, which accompany it, together with the knowledge and talent of using it, is not the result of one man's life; if it be, it fails of its aim. It requires two lives, or three—say three generations."

"I have heard the great Sir Robert lay down the law," said Naomi, "that it required one generation at least to make a fortune, and another to use it."

"I don't see the necessity," said Pevensey.

"Would you have had the late Sir Robert Peel? he spent ten of the best years of his life in making money by spinning cotton."

"Why not?"

"Because politics is a profession more difficult than cotton-spinning and money-making, and requires an education for it—requires money and position in the parents, and an open prospect for the child."

"If politics be a profession, let it be open to all, then, and be remunerated fairly, instead of being the *apanage* of birth and wealth, who indirectly make it pay them by jobbing and by monopoly."

"Who would bind a son to be a politician, more than one binds a son to be a poet? Such professions are waifs and strays from other callings, unless when an head in an aristocracy of wealth and birth can direct the choice spirits of its progeny to it. Had politics its followers and professors in the same way that literature has, they would be equally imprudent, adventurous, and improvident. You would not commit the state to such,—no more than you would commit the Church?"

"We differ, Lord Poyntz, we differ. My most rooted idea is the necessity of liberating

English politics from the monopoly of a caste."

"Which is to be done by making every man a politician."

"Even so, as were the Athenians."

"Who made a pretty mess of it."

"I have heard yourself complain, Mr. Pevensey," said Naomi, "that your attention to politics had injured you in your private affairs; that your business suffered; that the aim of your mercantile life was likely to be missed, in consequence of your attention being turned to the public cause, to which you tremble to give yourself entirely."

"It is true, Parliament destroys the merchant as well as the lawyer; and I am sure it does not improve the country gentleman."

"In other words, to be of use to one's self, to be of use to one's party, one's cause, one's country, one must become a professional politician. You see, Mr. Pevensey, you have not an argument left to stand on. Miss Worksworth has knocked the last from under you. Join us, and make your conditions."

"No," said Pevensey, "I will stick by the men of my own class and ideas, nor be

flattered into deserting them by its being called promotion."

"But the men of your class, as you call it, form no party, and can never form a ministry."

"Why not?"

"Because they are ignorant of the traditions of party, and condemn its first rules. They do not cohere; they cannot make mutual sacrifices. They preach impracticable things. And at this moment, with free-trade set at rest and in security, they have not a question nor an idea, wherewith to float into popular attention, much less popular favour. The utmost you can propose as a radical, is to be a useful, hard-working member of parliament, spending time, anxiety, and life for nothing. There is Hume, who has spent half a century in Parliament, and when he is dead, the people will erect him a monument at a penny a-head. But whoever helped him to place, or put it into his power to be a statesman?"

Pevensey was a little staggered at the undeniable truth, that he was serving the most exigent, the most heartless, the most inconsiderate and ungrateful of monsters—a British public.

“ Do the people’s business, and rot !” exclaimed Poyntz.

“ Do the business of the aristocracy, and rot also,” said Miss Worksworth, who thought of Charles Delmer. “ The moral to be drawn is, to do one’s own.”

Whilst these vain attempts were made to withdraw George Pevensey from the unprofitable profession of a patriot, Mr. Plynilimon was making great progress in the aristocratic ranks. At first looked up to for wealth, influence, and gravity, he was found to be what was least expected, amusing. He had observed and learned so much in his days of wandering and his period of starkness and dissimulation, that what he chose now to recount and utter came forth with increased raciness. His vulgarity was redeemed by his originality, and his meanness by his wit. In a short time he was a popular personage in the aristocratic club, to which his politics had introduced him. Amongst his new acquaintances were Count Fascine and the Honourable Fitzroy Fitzgerald, both members and frequenters of that joint-stock temple of scandal, feasting, and gambling.

It was within his hearing that these gen-

lemen, after a prelude of surmise, chose to make a bet as to the future intentions and prospects of one of Plynlimon's acquaintances. It was no other than Miss Worksworth, who Mr. Fitzgerald declared and betted would be Lady Poyntz in a week, and natural successor to the title of the Duchess of Armington. To this Count Fascine demurred; insisted that he knew better;—had his reasons for thinking that Miss Worksworth was previously engaged to Count St. Benoît, whom she had met that season at Vichy, and who had come to London to claim her hand.

True it was that the Count St. Benoît had come to London. Plynlimon saw the name announced in the fashionable papers, as a foreigner who frequented the circles chronicled in those prints. He was represented as envoy of the Count de Chambord, come to revive the dying embers of legitimism in England, and watch over the interests of his sovereign. Lord Knowsley and his colleagues were, of course, by reason of their ultra-Toryism, expected to show chivalrous enthusiasm for the elder exiled race. But Lord Knowsley cared more for the chivalry of cock-fighting than for that of legitimacy, while his colleagues

were of Lord Tiverton's opinion, that a Bonaparte was better than a Bourbon any day. So that the mission of the illustrious Count, instead of having any important influence on the rise or fall of dynasties, was restricted to the more humble but less honourable aim of taking vengeance upon a spirited woman.

Plynlimon seemed not an unpromising Mercury, to make a malignant use of such a report. And yet he entered upon the search of what the circumstances might be which led to it, with the ardour and particularity of a lady's maid. He was interested in delaying, even if he could not prevent, the marriage of Lord Poyntz, and neither risk nor trouble were able to deter him from seeking to compass that end.

The object of so idle a story was, however, in no favourable position for refuting it. Having broken with one puissant knot of society, by turning cold upon Mr. Delmer, and having broken with another equally puissant knot for not consenting to become the prey of such an adventurer as St. Benoît, Naomi had not around or behind her any of those social friends and circles, which act as a rampart. Were her pretensions to happiness and

to eminence less lofty, a lover of her own rank would have soon silenced or easily contemned such idle calumny. But the rumour reached the Poyntz family: whispers from so high a circle as the celestials not to be so lightly despised or so easily put down; and though not possessing consistency or particulars enough to break any solemn engagement, quite sufficient to annoy those concerned, and cause delay in the completion of their purpose.

In a position more critical than she herself was aware, Naomi found an active friend in him, who of all persons in England at the time had least leisure and mind to bestow on other concerns than his own. This was Jacobi. But he had conceived a strong friendship for Miss Worksworth, and in the midst of all his studies, labour, watchings, and workings, when he saw her assailed at once by the coldness of his great Whig acquaintances and the enmity of high Tory ones, he promptly rallied to the side of one who had incurred the same hatred, and who was persecuted by the same enemies as himself. He knew how generous her conduct had been to Delmer, how natural and just her subsequent coolness. He knew partly from herself the circumstance

of her momentary *engouement* for the celestials, and he guessed sufficiently at the reasons of her break with them, from the confessions of Fascine. The Count was a suitor for place, not, indeed, for any place in the gift of a British minister or government, but such as the friendship with a British minister might have enabled him to obtain at home. Jacobi flattered these desires, and was even thereby enabled to control the malignity of the celestials, and on two critical occasions not only to cover, but completely to rescue Naomi's reputation from the inveterate hostility of her foes. He early made it clear to Lord Poyntz who St. Benoît was. And he rendered still more clear to him the malignity of the report, by bringing Fascine to meet his Lordship, and what was more difficult, make Fascine sincere.

It was a great matter to Naomi, not only thus to be protected unceasingly by Jacobi's efforts, but to be honoured with his friendship. It prompted her to endeavour to form a circle, independent of fashion or of party, of persons eminent for talent and intellectual endowments. Jacobi mocked the idea. "All such men are hangers-on or lookers-to," he said,

“ too much lost in their own high qualities to esteem any quality in others, even that which is to patronise them and give them a step. Even if you sought out the mere scribblers, men who wield their pens without a thought beyond vanity or gain, you would find these men setting themselves up for idols, and therefore intolerant either of those who worshipped other idols, or sought to become such themselves. Look at me,” continued Jacobi: “ what man ever made his way so clearly by dint of brain and force of pen? I am hated by every commoner and every aristocrat,—by those of birth in all their shades, equally detested by those of commerce. Your professional politician scouts me as a man of letters. Your social magnate dreads me as an evil. Your Tory public man, as a man that would make Tories speak sense. Your Peelite, as a man who thinks there are other popular interests than material ones, and that cheapness is not the *summum bonum* of human existence. Surely, all these hatreds combined ought at least to recommend me to my own craft, to the penmen and the men of talent of England. They ought to be more proud of me than of Burke, for I have looked higher, and placed myself on

the uppermost round of the ladder;—prouder than even of Canning, for I never entered the party as a servitor in order to betray it as a master. I have fought my way bravely, independently. And yet there is not one of the whole herd of either the aristocracy or democracy of intellect, that is not ready to run me down, to spit upon me. One would think that my society were a slur upon them. I really know but one exception, and that exception is,—where I should least expect to have found it,—a Journal which at least respects my talents whilst denying my principles.”

CHAPTER XII.

ABOUT half a century ago there were two great countries reduced to the lowest state of penury and credit. These countries were France and Spain. Neither had any internal industry, and both had lost their colonies. Neither of them had a dollar in the treasury; and as to paper, no one would hear of it, much less accept it. In this state of things, a clever man, M. Ouvrard, saw that as two negatives make an affirmative, so out of two poverties one may create wealth. For though the French would not give each other credit, they had no objection to give credit to Spain, which nominally owned the Indies. And although no Spaniard would trust a Spanish minister, yet the Emperor Napoleon's name seemed good and trustworthy on a bill. The result was, that Spain and France, which had

neither of them any money or any credit for themselves, found, or were made to find, by the cunning Ouvrard, both money and credit for each other. With money thus found Napoleon was enabled to fight at Austerlitz, and Spain to rush to defeat and to ruin at Trafalgar.

Mr. Plynlimon, in a small way, found out the same secret, and put in practice the same art as Ouvrard. When he was not a rich man at Shuttlefield and Worksworth, and when he had still less property in Liverpool, he was enabled first to get up speculations at Liverpool, on the strength of the resources he was supposed to command in the manufacturing districts, and he was then able to pass as a monied magnate in the manufacturing districts by the extent of his operations in Liverpool. Gigantic speculations of his on the price and scarcity of cotton had proved successful, and laid the foundation of his railroad enterprise. And, again, the schemes of his railroad enterprise came to facilitate fresh speculations in cotton and colonial merchandise.

Fortune, however, is not always propitious. A cotton crop, pronounced scanty in the correspondence of every friend and of every journal, will at times turn out ample, if not

abundant; and railroad dividends, however satisfactory, as long as paid out of capital, will strangely decline, when there are nothing left but net profits to meet them. But the value of shares, too, will declare the respect and the trust paid to the creator of shares, and adversity quickly numbers the friends that prosperity made. Plynilimon had not only promised to make his own fortune, but to make the fortunes of scores of other people. To achieve this for oneself is arduous enough, no wonder if he failed with others, with whom, of course his failure was treachery. In fine, Plynilimon's reputation and affairs in a very short time fell into that state which is called critical, which some men sink into and escape from, gathering from the mere contact with ruin so much power and acuteness to avoid it, that they rise from their fall, as the giant who touched his mother earth, and sprung up from it young and refreshed.

Plynilimon did this. When thus on the brink of ruin, he had contrived to right himself by one of those daring strokes, which, as it were, coerce and intimidate fortune. But such things cannot be repeated *ad infinitum*. And Naomi was much surprised by a

visit from a personage from whom she had encountered much of covert malevolence and enmity, accompanied by other pretences, all of which had filled her with disgust and ill-repressed indignation.

“ You are, I dare say, surprised to see me, Miss Worksworth, no doubt. I understand your gesture. Some of my proposals have displeased you, and matters of business you have transferred to Mr. Pevensey to settle. But Mr. Pevensey is not a man to whom I can open myself in all respects, and I have therefore sought a personal interview, as that on which alone we can come to an understanding, and conclude our differences. I had once dreamed, pardon my impertinence, that a union between your wealth and my dexterity would have realized a power, which, for fortune and influence, would have rivalled the proudest of the land.”

Naomi rose, as if to withdraw.

“ I speak of what is past, and there is no need of your withdrawing. I consider you the betrothed of Lord Poyntz, and I am come to offer my assistance towards the removal of any obstacles that might start in the way of so desirable an alliance.

Naomi said, she had already been made sensible of Mr. Plynlimon's efforts on that subject.

"There is but one thing that could seriously affect Lord Poyntz, or interfere with his Lordship's plans."

"Several schemes have been tried, however," said Naomi. "There remains, no doubt, some untried, and you have come to threaten me with their employ or their explosion."

"Do I look menace? I assure you, I came here in the more humble character of a suppliant—a suppliant, however, as much in your behalf as in my own."

"I listen."

"The one thing, that might and that would alarm Lord Poyntz, is, that your property is answerable for any unfortunate result to my speculations, undertaken as your agent, and in the performance of my duty as manager of your interests, factories, and concerns."

"Speculations of yours on my behalf must have been long since concluded," said Miss Worksworth with a smile.

"I am sorry to say you will find upon inquiry this not to be the case. It was as the

avowed manager of Miss Worksworth's fortune that I made large purchases of cotton, and there are still heavy accounts and losses out of these speculations unsettled."

"In other words, Mr. Plynlimon, you have speculated with my means,—with the fortune of your employers and benefactors,—and having climbed to eminence and splendour with the gains, you would fling upon me the losses of your enterprise."

"No losses, I trust, only risks, momentary risks, easily surmounted with staunch friends and stout perseverance."

"Perseverance you have, Mr. Plynlimon, and I have no doubt that amongst your many new friends you will find staunch ones."

"There is no new friendship," said Plynlimon, "that would survive for one moment even the slight confession I have just made."

"It is certainly calculated to stagger any friendship, even of the oldest. But you have not injured all your friends as you have me, and may hope more indulgence from them."

"Indulgence is for children, Miss Worksworth. Arrived at my age and circumstances, it is the last sentiment I expect to excite. You will consult your own interest, not merely

in being indulgent to me, but aiding me to extricate myself from my serious embarrassment."

"Responsible already, as you assert, you wish me to render myself still more so for your engagements."

"Exactly, in order to extricate yourself finally from all responsibility, risk, or connexion with one who has had the misfortune so deeply to displease you."

"You cannot expect me to act upon my own judgment, Mr. Plynlimon, in so serious a matter."

"No judgment can be so clear and unprejudiced as yours. That of any one in addition would seriously aggravate that danger which I seek to dissipate."

"You must know I would not stir without Mr. Pevensey in such a matter. It would be breaking confidence with him, even although it might not be ruinous to myself."

"Mr. Pevensey is my rival in divers ways. He has replaced me in your confidence."

Miss Worksworth's look said, that this surely was not hers or Mr. Pevensey's fault.

"In none but you, on whose honour I rely, and in whose power I completely put myself—

in none but you could I confide the fact of my credit not being so immaculate as it seems. I have a commercial, a social, and latterly a political reputation; they all hold together—all procure friends, and depend on them. A break, then, upon one would depreciate the others beyond redemption.”

“Why have you assumed so dangerous and difficult a position?”

“Circumstances. Besides, I do not seek or wish to excuse my conduct. You have your ambition, Miss Worksworth, I have mine. If they clash, one of them must be shipwrecked, or perhaps both, and I merely want to avoid that catastrophe.”

“I do not by any means fully comprehend you,” said Naomi, blushing, nevertheless, at the allusion to his ambition: “I repeat, that without consulting Mr. Pevensey, I do nothing.”

“You cannot propose to put me in the power of a political rival, and on the eve of a general election. I am solemnly bound to my Tory friends to contest Shuttlefield.”

“Mr. Pevensey will be supported by myself and by the Duke of Armington.”

“Indeed, that will be of little use. If

Mr. Pevensey is supported by Poyntzstetts, he dare not show his face to the people at Shuttlefield, who suffered last time in their dispute; there would be no name for his treason, although," said Plynlimon, smiling with malignant vituperation, "I should try to find one."

"But if you are not able to meet your commercial engagements, under which plea, or which supposition you come to me, why spend time and anxiety in political enterprise?"

"I shall never give in, never reveal. I may explode as a barrel of gunpowder, which shall not prevent me looking brave to the last. It is my only chance. I ask you to lend me your name,—I shall use it, whether you consent to lend it me or not."

"You were just now saying, you wanted a name for Pevensey's conduct; what epithet would you apply to yours?"

"Impudence, no doubt, consummate; any name you please. But my conduct is unavoidable, and my language at least sincere."

"I should be inclined to assign yet another name to your conduct, Mr. Plynlimon. You came to ask me for a favour, and no small one, for it seems required to save you from ruin. In asking that favour you reveal to me

the peculiar state of your circumstances. You ask my confidence, nay, throw yourself upon it; and yet, in doing this, you use the unwarrantable threat of using my name without my permission. I know very little of business, Mr. Plynlimon, or of life. But this appears to me an atrocity, for which it is difficult to find a name."

"You misunderstand me. Your name has been already made use of, and at a time when I had the right to make use of it."

"What! for large speculations?"

"Well, I had the liberty, and used it."

"And are determined to do so still?"

"Nay, I only meant the responsibility for a certain time."

"Really, Mr. Plynlimon, what you have said is quite sufficient to remove any scruples which I might have had of disclosing what you have entrusted to me. And my own safety obliges me to recur to sound and able advice and aid in such a case."

"I offer you both, and of the best."

"I mistrust them and you in this case. I may spare you the mention of the circumstances to Mr. Pevensey, but I cannot keep them from Lord Poyntz."

"To betray me to Poyntzstett were worst of all."

"I shall make my conditions."

"You will ruin your own present prospects."

"It is that very consideration that makes it more imperative for me to be frank."

Mr. Plynlimon had got into a scrape. From perceiving that in the long course of their negotiations, and during her efforts to extricate her affairs from his grasp, Naomi had smothered her resentment, concealed her indignation, and showed herself fully sensible to the necessity of dissembling, Plynlimon had formed an idea that her character was far more timid and bending than it proved. He had hoped to carry his present point by intimidating her; and the very last thing he expected was that she would confess such a complication of her affairs to Lord Poyntz. But to this resolution she adhered, in despite of all his remonstrances, all his cajoleries, all his promises, all his threats; and the utmost he could do was to obtain as much secrecy as was possible, consistent with informing Lord Poyntz of her situation, of Plynlimon's de-

mands, and with abiding by his advice, should he think proper to give any.

Lord Poyntz was thunderstruck at the audacity of one who had sprung to so influential a position, and who hoped to keep it by such means. Although precluded from divulging it, and making the proper use of his information to crush the upstart, he at once recommended refusal and discretion. The cause of Mr. Plynlimon's straight and difficulties became soon evident; at the half-yearly meeting of the shareholders of that line which he had made his own, and which he ruled as a despot, there was one person found to rise in mutiny, and make serious charges. We know not how many thousand shares he accused Plynlimon of having taken and put into his own pocket. The charge was not met by denial; on the contrary, it was maintained as a regular and understood transaction, the enterprise being of impossible success if the obstacles interposed by the local influence,—able and ready to crush it,—had not been removed by gifts, he might have said bribes, of this nature. Poyntztett was indignant, Miss Worksworth was equally so, as was in-

deed the whole county, which Mr. Plynlimon accused of receiving bribes and gratuities for waving those powers of political and local obstruction, which were at their disposal. The indignation was loud; but Plynlimon had supporters, who pronounced that his system of secret-service money was necessary and correct; and though a committee was appointed to examine into his employment of so large a fund, he still held his head high, called the attack a calumny, and set it down to political antagonism and private malice.

In due time was made Lord Knowsley's appeal to the country, and the electoral voice of the southern division of ——— again called to respond. Plynlimon declared himself candidate for Shuttlefield, and the old Tory corporation rallied to him, with the hope of retrieving defeat in following so promising a candidate. A very young scion of a noble house, politically obscure, came forward to replace Charles Delmer for the division of the county, and was opposed by Lord Poyntz, as well as by several candidates of Liberal principles. It was a critical moment for the house of Poyntztett: aspiring to political lead, it was important that his grace should

show himself popular as well as paramount in his own neighbourhood. This candidate was peculiarly annoying to him. Hitherto Poyntzstett had had the support of the Tory party, and it flattered itself now to have possessed the good opinion of the more rational portion of it. And no doubt the Duke would have found it so; but here had upstarted a candidate, born the other day of a commercial speculation, the railroad, yet wielding a patronage and an influence over persons and things, that even the lordly rights of Poyntzstett had not amounted to in upwards of a century. It was a blow to the rightful aristocracy, and augured something more wrong and rotten in the state of England than even the rare and temporary triumphs of Radicalism itself.

The Duke, however, had a ready escape for his dignity. If opposed to Plynlimon, he was by no means of Mr. Pevensey's principles or party, whose candidature he had at first tolerated or supported, partly out of deference for Miss Worksworth, partly from a wish to bid higher than the Whigs in conciliating the Radicals, and thus supporting his character as a practical reformer. As the issue of the contest seemed doubtful in Shuttlefield, he

was able to assume or affect a position of neutrality, not only because he differed from the extreme opinions of both candidates, but because it was his wish, as far as his influence might be exerted, to give full electoral liberty to his tenants or dependants in Shuttlefield, leaving them to bestow their votes as they might please.

"Well, Thaddeus," said Ned Strike, "are we to turn out Poyntzstetts this time?"

"Poyntzstetts, indeed! do people know where it is? The cotton-lords superseded the land-lords, and now the railroad lords are kings in their turn. We must fight the new tyrant, if we fight any."

"Tyrant for tyrant; the new pay better than the old."

"What matters it," said Epicurus, whose rubicund face still shone wherever there was wassail or converse, "which is uppermost, provided they be rich. Any master, any lord, for me, that is rich. If the railroad folk be the most flush for the hour, let us have them; and when their purse is empty, let us give our votes for him that has it full."

"I've seen the rich more tame-hearted than the poor," observed Ned Strike.

"The rich, as you call them," said Thaddeus, "are often as needy as the poor. I am for honesty and independence."

"No good in them 'ere two things for a parliament or a political man," said Epicurus. "They are very well for you and me."

"And why not for parliament men?"

"It makes 'em fit for nothing, and good for nothing. What did Pevensey ever do for Shuttlefield?"

"Stood up for great questions, denounced great abuses; never sold himself on them."

"The great questions get on of themselves. It is the little ones that we feel. If the Tory had been returned at the last election, see all the good things, and the good places, that would have been to be had for Shuttlefield folk. But we helped Pevensey to turn him out; and what has Shuttlefield had from Pevensey, but words?"

"It is not you or me, in any case, that would have had anything," said Thaddeus.

"True, for you; what is every one's right, is nobody's profit."

"Why should you be always looking to profit? Can you not be contented with an honest vote?"

“ And what can a poor man understand but his profit? What can he know about politics, or how tell his friend from his foe? Are those that palaver him, better than those that pay him? If you tell me, indeed, that we are to have a Charter, that the Charter is to make the working-men masters; and that when we are masters, we need not give up the mastery for nothing,—then I understand you. But where’s the Charter now-a-days? What is there to look for, but to live? And who hopes now that politics will ever discover a way to make the poor man live? ”

“ What gives wages in America? ”

“ Not politics, I take it; but plenty of the materials of work—land, to begin with; that gives food, and food gives wages. ”

“ Now, that’s just what Pevensey and the free-traders say. ”

“ I’m no enemy to free-trade. If it has set the Poyntzes down, it has set the Plynlmons up; and it’s all one to me. ”

“ And you’ll not vote this time for Pevensey? ” said Thaddeus to Strike.

“ I always went before for something I did not understand, and for some one I did not care for. This time I shall go for beer. ”

Such was the recklessness of the artizans of Shuttlefield to all parties and persons in politics. The present generation of them had been so often worn out and galvanized, as it were, by Tory promises on one side, by Radical schemes on another,—by Reform, by the Charter, by a host of political and social panaceas or improvements, that they had come not to put faith in any. And the tidings which they heard, as well as the consequences reported of workmen's struggles in other parts of the world, led to a despair or a distrust of anything that could be accomplished, either in politics or in morals, by public men or public action. It is this deep conviction, this complete disillusion, which on both sides of the Channel has detached so many millions from their native soil, and sent them to seek in a new clime, a new hemisphere, and on a new soil, for those fair prospects and just returns, which Europe and its institutions certainly deny to the working-man.

From the utter indifference, or worse, of the lower class of voters, the decision of the contest rested greatly with the class above them; which had also been much sickened with extremes and theories in politics. It was for this

class precisely that Plynlimon had patronage and favours. He was, moreover, much admired by the religious amongst them: he won the large majority by his active charity, his zeal and readiness in the promoting and managing of benevolent institutions, and by the connexions which such duties beget in a country where there are few social relations of any other kind.

Thaddeus knew, that at least this portion of Mr. Plynlimon's reputation might with no great difficulty be destroyed. Though he at the same time knew, that accusation without, not only proof, but irrefragable proof, would fall back upon him who made it, and leave the man of morals, wealth, and influence unscathed. Accordingly, he awaited a certain time and circumstance, which he had reason to expect would furnish him with the means of at least pulling a stone out of the foundation of Mr. Plynlimon's colossal reputation.

That gentleman was made aware that Lord Poyntz was acquainted with his pressing demands upon Miss Worksworth, for her name and the facilities which it would afford for raising a large sum of money, destined to quiet certain troublesome creditors, as well no

doubt as to meet the expenses of the election. Since Poyntzstetts had professed itself neutral in the electoral struggle, there was less inconvenience in its being acquainted with Mr. Plynlimon's necessities. The man of supposed wealth pressed for an answer to his demand, that he might know how he stood towards Miss Worksworth. It was promised that he should receive it, if he repaired to Poyntzstetts on a certain day.

As his carriage drove up a new avenue which had been opened from Shuttlefield, and which his lordship had opened for the holiday folk of the town, there darted across Plynlimon's mind a recollection of some one whom he had met on this spot, when it was a sequestered one, and whom he had with much felicity and address got rid of. This was Rose Errott. He smiled at a recollection which so seldom rose up ; and congratulated himself on having shipped to another hemisphere one who might, under present circumstances, have contributed towards the stripping of that mask, with which he sedulously covered himself. There were saunterers up the present path—Shuttlefield people.

“ Ay,” thought Plynlimon, “ the Duke may

open his parks, and court popularity with artizan and citizen; but the man, like me, who can employ the one, and double his little savings for the other, is more than a match even for the old lords of the manor."

The figure of one of the saunterers struck him as Thaddeus. And this set the ambitious man upon another vein of thought.

"The Chartist," thought he, "would gladly be avenged of me for his eighteen months' imprisonment; what can he have to do, turning his steps to Poyntzstetts."

Plynlimon had hoped to meet Miss Worksworth, for he never imagined that she had not come. He was received by Lord Poyntz, who began by expressing his regret to learn that Mr. Plynlimon's new fortune and full-blown grandeur required such support as that which he so peremptorily sought. Miss Worksworth had resolved to grant none. She could not believe herself implicated in the manner that Mr. Plynlimon represented; and even if she were so, she felt that to grant his present request was merely to implicate herself still further.

Mr. Plynlimon was very malignant, very menacing, very reckless. Miss Worksworth

and Lord Poyntz, he said, no doubt considered that for his own sake he would preserve his credit unshaken. But he had provided means for separating his own trading and liabilities from those of the Worksworth property, and his administration of it. He could find support from other friends on this understanding. His religious friends whom he kept, and the religious community, from which he had not altogether severed, would not allow one of their party, who had attained so great an influence and position, to lose it before it could be clearly proved he were unworthy.

Lord Poyntz bowed to this string of vaunts and menaces; and as Mr. Plynlimon was departing, mentioned that the Duke, his father, had some business to transact with him. Mr. Plynlimon was accordingly conducted to his Grace's presence, and found that nobleman with a countenance of more magisterial gravity than was his wont. There were some civilities in opening the business, whatever it was; but the impatient readiness of Plynlimon having cut short the necessity of a prelude, the Duke acquainted him that information had been sworn before him, charging him, Mr. Plynlimon, with the forcible abduction of the person

of a female, who was subsequently lured on board an emigrant ship, and carried, against her will, to New South Wales.

Mr. Plynlimon laughed at what he called the idle story, and said that no doubt his Grace would send out some one to have the deponents examined in Australia.

“There is no necessity for sending so far, Mr. Plynlimon,” said his Grace, “for the young woman is here. She seems to have got here by the mere intensity of her ardour for revenge.” Rose Errott was immediately produced before the astonished eyes of Plynlimon, against whom she burst forth in imprecations, descriptive of the infamy with which she had been deceived and treated. Forcible retention was necessary to compress the explosion of fervour, incapable of confining itself to words.

“I must congratulate your Grace,” said Plynlimon, “and your ally, Mr. Thaddeus, who has left his mark before now at Poyntzstett, and whom I just saw proceeding here, no doubt, in this woman’s company, of having put together one of the most adroit electioneering conspiracies that ever came before a parliamentary committee. This one, I have

no doubt, will figure there. I shall not fail to confront this woman, who is, moreover, a *protégée* of Miss Worksworth's. The tone and nature of the conspiracy are both of them too plain."

Thus enacting the bravo, and affecting indignation, Mr. Plynlimon withdrew, and was allowed to do so by the Duke, who knew not well what to think of his audacity.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE tendency of the times is to reduce everything to one value; genius, fitness, authority, eminence, ascendancy, are all measured by money. In a few years, if things progress, as they are doing amongst us, there will be no other quality left worth having, no other claim. If a man seeks to be a legislator, he obtains it by money. If he seeks to be an administrator, the thing is achieved by money. Be the place high or low that is sought, it is only to be obtained by money. England has put Hindostan to farm. That country is covered over by a number of locusts called Englishmen, who, under pretence of ruling, fatten on it. Every one of them have acquired that right by money. Under other governments, in other countries, in other centuries, it was generally held that the best claims and

preparation for certain functions in life, were fitness, or talent, or study, or experience. The most barbarous country never thought of appointing a man to the priestly office because he could pay for it. Neither did they think that the way to obtain good soldiers and generals was to make men pay for the right to exercise military talent. In England, the most civilized of countries, we have reversed that great mistake of the simple and the uncivilized; we have discovered that money is the great measure of all things—the universal title. It is not merely our priesthood, our soldiers, our administrators, our judges, our legislators, and, consequently, our rulers, our peers, and our dignitaries, that become so for money, but even in our choice and establishment of the engineers and instruments in which skill ought to be the paramount requisite, even then we prefer money to skill. Thus, if a great commercial company, with accumulated capital, associate to fit out a fleet of steamers for the supply of the means of transport throughout the globe, it will instantly be affirmed that the engines will be ordered from the best makers, the captain chosen from the best mariners, the engineers from the most capable of their pro-

fession. No such thing; the building of the vessels themselves will be in the first place a job; the engines will be procured of those masters who will give the engineer the largest bribe for ordering it of them; the captain will be chosen from amongst those whose friends will pay most, and there will not be an humble engineer appointed who will not have been compelled to give his 30% or 40% for his place. The result, of course, is, that the engine explodes instead of working; that the captain steers upon shoals instead of into port; that the vessels go periodically to the bottom, and never to their destination; and that the worship of Plutus works its own merited punishment by destroying the whole enterprise, in which the vile metal was expended on the principle of money worship.

Abuses like these, no doubt, existed at all times; nor should they have been alluded to, if they were confined to the powerful and the rich, to the senate-house of the state, the hall of meeting of the commercial company, to great men and lofty speculations; but the misery and danger of the present day is, that this money-title has been pushed down so as to reach the very working class.

The happiest of countries for the lower order

are not those in which political freedom exists, but in which there is free scope for industry, for merit, and for talent. It is not the political republicanism of America that makes it prosperous and happy, but its social and economical circumstances. The principle of the United States and of England is one; money is everything, leads to everything, procures everything; but money is procurable in America by the poor man, whilst it is not procurable in Europe. Poor states have remedied this. The Roman Catholic religion opens the doors of churches and convents as portals through which the lower classes might rise to eminence. France opens the army. Prussia, by means of a large popular system of education, has flung open a wide door in its university for government employ and distinction. In England every door is closed; for the poor man is here as much a serf as he is in Russia, tied, not to the soil, but to poverty, unless, like the serf, he can redeem himself out of earnings that scarcely ever exceed the means of livelihood. The state gives away annually hundreds of thousands of places, and hundreds of thousands of pounds. These are given in recompense of talent, and as remuneration of

services, which the lower classes could pursue as well or better than the middle or the higher classes ; yet the middle and higher classes get all. To him that has, much is given ; from him that has none, even that which he has is taken away. Such is the history of the public distribution of wealth and patronage in England.

Of all the means of bettering or securing human prospects, the poor, or the earning Englishman has but the one—to save money : whilst, we repeat it, in other countries the poor man has many means offered to him. One should think that the state, seeing that it gave or left but this one advantage—this one way of safety to the earner,—might facilitate it, regulate it, secure it from trickery and spoliation—do, in fact, for the poor man what the rich man can do for himself. But, no ; the English Government scorns so humble a task, so merely popular a duty. It can secure the great capitalist his three or his four per cent., and may invoke all the gods to pour down thunder on the head or the hand that would touch them. But the savings' bank of the poor man's economy, oh ! that may be left to any one's keeping. Why should a govern-

ment of the well-born and rich soil its finger with such mean cares? Such soliloquy does England make, personified in its ministers, and yet they blush not.

One of these temples of economy, which the state refuses to care for, had been set up in Worksworth, as in other towns, and had thriven in proportion to the rising fortunes of the locality. 'Thousands had amassed their first important savings by committing them periodically to the keeping of their Savings' Bank. In such a prosperous and new community, at first it was not necessary to leave such deposits long, for no sooner did the humble savings reach an amount of even small magnitude, than there was plenty of profitable—indeed, of the most profitable modes of investment. Houses and shops in a young town, or a village rising to be a town, are the true El Dorados of the industrious, of the frugal earner, and the thriving tradesman. But towns cannot always be on the increase, nor retail trading have an unlimited expansion; yet when there was relaxation or suspension in these, there was the railroad share and subscription investment, with promise not only of being a safe deposit until an opportunity came of profitable outlay, but

of being the profitable outlay itself. Mr. Plynlimon urged poor and rich, and gave them confidence—confidence ill-repaid, for shares did not keep up; and whilst Mr. Plynlimon contrived to throw compensating advantages in the way of the larger holders, he allowed the smaller and poorer ones to sink.

There had been, however, a fair share of work recently, and a considerable impulse to trade, money-making, and money-employing of all kinds, so that, on the day of the week allotted for paying in and drawing out of the Worksworth Savings' Bank, numbers flocked to it for both purposes. One morning the office was opened as usual, and those who came to deposit found unimpeded facility, but for those who sought to withdraw their deposits, and who had, according to the rules, given warning of their intention to that effect, those were told that the key of the iron chest was not forthcoming. It was, however, in the safe keeping of the manager, Mr. Plynlimon, who never trusted others with his business, and who to that business never failed to attend punctually. Confidence, therefore, was not shaken in the first comer, although the story ran of the bank's not being ready with its

payments ; and this brought crowds anxious to ascertain the fact, and, if necessary, to demand their own. An accident or a malady had certainly befallen the punctual Plynlimon ; for half-an-hour, three-quarters, the whole hour elapsed, and this embodiment of active charity did not make his appearance. The crowd by this time had mustered in considerable strength and noise. The women were in full proportion to the men ; and some had brought their children with them, as if the chorus of despair and indignation would be incomplete without the infant treble. Murmurs became soon audible ; and murmurs, unappeased, soon rose into clamour. A mob of deluded, ignorant, or worthless people, when inflamed from any cause, is a fearful, and, at the same time, a pitiable spectacle : what is it, when known to consist of the most industrious and best conducted of the population, with the most just and ample cause for any amount of indignation they might display ?

Although Mr. Plynlimon was the director, he was not the only one. Several respectable names stood alongside of his in the responsibility. They were soon found, aroused, alarmed, and brought in consternation to the

establishment which they had neglected. Who could have suspected? Who durst have hinted the necessity of inspection or control? Each of these men found themselves burdened with a weight of responsibility likely to overwhelm him. Each, therefore, thought of himself, and of his own impending ruin, and of how it could be avoided. There was not a soul to care for the interests of the people. No wonder they murmured and clamoured. The working man, who saw the fruits of his year's, or two years' economy torn from him, might well have been excused if he manifested his impatience and indignation with his strong right arm. In the present instance he could not bring himself to believe that he could be unnaturally robbed of his all by an institution which his master and his betters of the trading class had set on foot, and undertaken to manage. When, therefore, some of the directors came forward, and said, that they did not know the cause of Mr. Plynlimon's absence, that an accident might have been the cause of it, that they would, in the meantime, look into the affairs of the bank, and that they had no doubt of finding it as sure and solvent as on the first day of its opening, the unfortunate

men, women, and families, whose fears were suspended, not removed by such an explanation, separated for the moment; but it was to fill Worksworth and Shuttlefield with one universal wail. Plynlimon was concerned in both Savings' Banks; which, however, opening on different days, left it uncertain whether his discredit would extend to both.

Miss Worksworth was on a visit at some distance when the absence of Mr. Plynlimon, and the consequent closing of the Savings' Bank money-chest, first took place. She hurried back, however, at the tidings, resolved to do all at least in her power to remedy and avert the ruin and the shame of a confiscation of the savings of the industrious population, through the defalcations of a man that owed all the confidence reposed in him, to his being the agent of her fortune and family.

On the day for the opening of the Bank at Shuttlefield, the same scene took place as at Worksworth. Mr. Plynlimon was not forthcoming, and then there was no hope of his being detained by accident. He had positively and irrevocably disappeared. Not only had he carried away the key of the

people's treasury, but the contents of that treasury had disappeared. Here was legitimate cause of tumult. The other directors durst not show themselves. Sir Jonathan Jukes, one of them, had been warned several times by George Pevensey of the danger of continuing such a trust without control, but was answered that the money of the poor could not be in safer hands; and, at all events, was a trifle amongst the large capital at Plynlimon's command.

The event was a terrible triumph for those who preached—and they were not wanting in Shuttlefield—that wealth was robbery, and the wealthy spoliators. Epicurus himself could not feel that everything was for the best. Ned Strike was uncontradicted in his proposal to demolish the house in which the poor had deposited and lost their money. But it was a private building, and the offices merely hired, so completely was public sanction refused to the small investments of the poor. Thaddeus exulted in the fall and exposure of Plynlimon, but wisely thought it would be doing that culprit an honour to destroy any house of his; and he soon dissuaded others from entertaining the thought, by hinting that the house

was now the creditors', not his own. Mr. Omichund had applied at the very first for a military force, but no magistrate would second the demand. The present Duke of Armington declared that the town authorities of Shuttlefield deserved all the vengeance the mob could wreak on them for their selfishness and neglect. Having no victim, no object, no obstacle, the popular impulse wasted itself in clamour and imprecation, in which others besides the mere people cordially though silently joined.

Just, however, as the clamour did reach its height before the closed doors of the Bank, an object did appear, which drew attention. It was a carriage, of which the occupant directed the driver to make his way through the crowd. Miss Worksworth was that occupant; and she was fully as much excited as those who stood around, although that excitement was expressed by pallor and anxiety, not anger. Her intention—scarcely explained to herself—no doubt had been, to address the assembled people, but her courage, as well as her strength, failed her in any such effort; and all she could do was to speak, and in no loud voice, to the few who came under her carriage window. These men she acquainted with who she was, her

name, her position, and her own employ of Mr. Plynlimon, who had made unworthy use of his position, and her declaration that no working-man, or working-man's family, should be at a loss by the criminal conduct of Mr. Plynlimon. She was prepared and determined, she said, to make good the defalcations, whatever might be the amount, out of her own fortune. The words were quickly repeated, eagerly spread, and produced at once a revulsion of feeling, as loudly and eagerly expressed as had been the previous one of despair and resentment.

The consciousness and the sight of having changed the despair and misery of hundreds into consolation and happiness, removed the mist from Naomi's eyes, and the weight from her heart. Although many voices in the crowd were those of idle clamourers, who had no substantial interest in the agitation, still there were countenances and groups within reach of Miss Worksworth's eye, as she bent it on the crowd, whose expressions and ejaculations plainly and feelingly told of ruin averted, and confidence in their future and in Providence, by one and the same word restored. A passing glance discovered wives and husbands, lovers and beloved in that crowd, the

bitter disappointment on whose brows had been turned to gladness. Naomi had been for years seeking to achieve such an act as this, and to attain such a feeling, yet with all her wealth and good-will, had been unable to move or to modify the wretched, the treacherous, and the cold. An unexpected catastrophe enabled her to taste at length of that pleasure, and to accomplish that duty. How dearly it might be purchased, she cared but little.

One thing astonished her. This was, that Plynlimon, a man so full of wiles, resources, and pertinacity, should have been so suddenly beaten, and compelled to withdraw and disappear without a struggle, and apparently without a crime. She learned, however, from Thaddeus, that he had not done so, and that to the last he struggled with diabolical spirit against his fate. His first object, of course, was to get Rose into his power, to induce her to listen to him, trust to him, and serve him. He had latterly kept himself up, amidst his sinking fortunes, solely by the support of that religious party with which he had been so long connected, and which was more indulgent to his hypocrisy than to Naomi's worldliness. To retain the respect and countenance

of these friends, he had ventured to abduct and actually to transport Rose Errott against her will, trusting that on her arrival in the colony, her youth, beauty, and recklessness, would soon make for her a position that would leave nothing to regret at home. He forgot, however, that another, as well as himself, might have vindictiveness for the strongest passion. And Rose equalled him in that quality, as well as in boldness and in artifice. She knew Plynlimon too well to think of putting herself in his power, and she clung obstinately to the advice and protection of Thaddeus. But whether won or wearied by the solicitations of Plynlimon, she at last began to express the wish to grant him an interview. To Thaddeus's words of warning she replied, that it was merely curiosity on her part to see what he would say or do,—a fierce and feline pleasure to enjoy fully his embarrassment and despair. Besides, thought Rose, he escapes too easily. He has saved, no doubt, quite enough of fortune, and with no crime beyond that of bankruptcy, he may easily secrete himself and enjoy that. The wonder of Thaddeus was, indeed, that Plynlimon should linger, and risk arrest, after the stoppage of the Works-

worth Savings' Bank. And he was not sorry that Rose, or any other cause delayed him, in order to make his exposure and punishment more full and flagrant. Rose, therefore, of her own accord, and by Thaddeus's permission, consented to see Plynilimon.

"What on earth brought you back from Melbourne, Rose, the land of gold and fortune?"

"Vengeance is sweeter than either money or luxury," said Rose, in coarser language than is here employed. "Besides, rogues there might have been as bad as rogues here, and I had more to claim and more to expect from those at home."

"I did it for your good. You might have been respectable there, which riches cannot make you here."

"Oh! oh! you sent me out to make me respectable! Suppose I came back to do as much by you?"

"I hope you came back from a good feeling. Vengeance was natural to you, as you understood my conduct. You would be grateful, if you understood it right."

"I am come to give you proofs of my gratitude."

"We are in the same boat, Rose."

"Against your will."

"The same fate awaits us,—to be ruined or set right again."

"What could set me right?"

"You have my fortune in your hands, and can ask the very highest price you please."

"And you would say yes to me, with an oath. But who is to believe you?"

"If I am ruined, what have you to come upon? I escape you. If you enable me to make all right, I am there as a mark, whether you wish money, rank, or revenge."

"There's truth in that, come from what mouth it will."

Thus did the man of plausibility once more get round the woman who had so much cause to beware of him. But to beware she did not cease, although humouring him with a less discontented aspect than she had yet shown. We shall not record their dialogue, their mutual reproaches or excuses, their fallings-out or makings-up, artful as they were from the suspicions and malignity on either side, which only in appearance were set to rest. Plynlimon at last called for some refreshment, their meeting

having taken place in a house which provided such. But from the moment that the liquid was set on the table, Rose eyed it with a vigilant glance, and, as she paused and thought, never lost sight of it for an instant. She therefore drank at first, as did Plynlimon. But her subsequent refusal, as it evinced most injurious suspicion, annoyed him much. Neither in their long conversation could he win upon her either to disappear, or in any other way bely the testimony given before Lord Armington. In the midst of the dispute and angry recrimination which this gave rise to, Plynlimon sought to put an end to it by forcing more of the wine upon the woman.

"Jemmy," said the woman, "I will drink after you, never before."

"If you trust me so little as that, woman, you will not stir a foot to save me."

Rose looked full assent.

"You are bent upon my ruin, even if working at the same time your own."

The same assent.

"Then here's to you ere we part," said Plynlimon, emptying the glass, and giving another from the same decanter to Rose. She

pledged him then without suspecting, as without relenting.

And she was once more deceived. Plynlimon had done precisely what she suspected,—dropped poison after the first draught into the wine ; and seeing that his *quondam* paramour could not be got to drink it alone, and that she was not only bent upon his ruin, but fully able to effect it, he set her the fatal and final example of drinking off his glass. Rose did the same. The fatal and the double murder had scarcely been accomplished, when recrimination or repentance was cut short by the entrance of constables, who had discovered Plynlimon's retreat, and came to arrest him as one who had made away with the money of the poor.

Plynlimon laughed at what he called their impertinence.

Great as was the joy in Worksworth and in Shuttlefield at the bubble of Plynlimon's villainy having burst, and its poorer victims saved from the results of his dishonesty, there was one person who undertook to take up the threads of this ravelled skein of mismanagement, dishonesty, and gambling, with a most anxious heart. He feared, and not without reason, the effect

of the explosion, not merely to Plynlimon, but to Miss Worksworth, who could not but be more or less implicated by his speculations, particularly if their origin could be traced back to the time when he managed her property and represented her interests. In addition to the embarrassments springing out of this, came her bold engagement to meet Plynlimon's defalcation in the Savings' Bank. Naomi had not concealed from herself that the sum might be large, nor was she surprised when she learned that it was monstrous. But she was determined before and after to adhere to the execution of her promise, however extravagant and rash.

With the liquidation of these new debts were mingled claims arising out of Plynlimon's engagements, some of which it was necessary to pay, some to compromise, whilst others required her recourse to law. The catastrophe of Plynlimon, with all the flagrant circumstances attending it, laid great hold on public attention and curiosity. And they became a daily topic of interest, not only in the vicinity of Shuttlefield, but in the metropolis itself. In time it became necessary to sell some portion

of the Worksworth property, and then it was discovered and hinted, that the generous heiress of a gigantic property had been nearly ruined by the treachery of her *quondam* agent, when she unwittingly burdened herself with reimbursing the defalcations of the Savings' Bank. So that, after all, Plynlimon wreaked his vengeance on an innocent victim, and added, even after he had disappeared from the scene, to the diabolical nature of his acts.

Naomi was fortunate in having at so critical a moment a friend so zealous, so fair, so acute, and so disinterested, as Pevensey. She was enabled perfectly to repose in the future, whatever that might be, confident that all that could be done for her worldly interests would be done. For money itself, or the fortune it constituted, she cared little, except that an accession of wealth was most desirable to Lord Poyntz, and constituted his chief hope of restoring the position of his family. This was the only thought which had opposed her resolve to cover Plynlimon's defalcation. She felt that a duty, however, superior even to Lord Poyntz's necessities. Her hazardous and generous act did not, it seems, meet with his

lordship's approbation. It must have been so. For he, who had been a willing and an eager friend and counsellor, drew back and grew cold very soon. He had come forward immediately after, with a generous impulse to condole and assure. But in a little time rumour and reflection cooled his ardour, and checked his forwardness. Eagerness gave way to politeness, and attention to distraction. Nor was a woman's eye long in discerning the prudential change.

Naomi had applied to herself the great self-flattery of poor and rich,—that of having attractions and worth independent of the gifts of fortune. In the months which elapsed after the catastrophe of Plynlimon, she had full opportunity of discovering how very little her personal qualities had weighed in the balance with those who had honoured her with respect, with friendship, or with love. Could she have heard the whisper of the London world, she would have seen this fully ; but quite sufficient reached her in her retirement to make her aware, that in a certain world misfortune, like death, consigned the sufferer to a natural, and what was considered a merited oblivion.

It was but an opening of the eyes to a very dreary world of truth. It was mortifying, yet it was in a degree consoling, since it showed that all the pleasure which wealth brought, as well as all the sentiments it inspired, were false. If she could not be sorry to lose an affection like Lord Poyntz's, which was merely synonymous with the paying of his mortgages, she could not be sorry for the loss of wealth, which procured merely such deceptions. What she really did regret, was the years of youth and of health spent in that delusive world which wealth had conjured up around her spectrally, without giving her time for realizing anything.

There was no quarrel, no explanation, between Naomi and Lord Poyntz. The latter, like his class, detested either strong emotions or their semblance. His affection, like his purpose, died therefore a natural death, without affording one scene that would lend itself to the drama. Poyntztett was stately as ever, and as poor, for the efforts of the Duke could do no more than put an aspect of competency over the cravings of grandeur. Lord Poyntz merely looked to politics to procure him what Hymen had failed, or at least threatened to fail, in realizing. Naomi, in a humble chaise,

passed Poyntztett, and contemplated it without a sigh. She met with less profound reverence from lords and valets. But her welcome in Shuttlefield, when business brought her thither, was more like that paid to a queen than any salutation that Miss Worksworth's fabulous wealth had ever procured her.

CHAPTER XIV.

DURING the first months that elapsed after the catastrophes of Shuttlefield and of Plylimon, Naomi considered herself as shorn of all her fortune. The different accounts that reached her, the different facts that were revealed, the various claims and embarrassments, in enumerating and dealing with which even the patient spirit of Pevensey succumbed to irritation and despair,—all pointed to the conclusion, that the liabilities of Miss Workworth exceeded the property that could be realized to meet them. Thus was stricken away the foundation upon which her edifice of life had been built,—her factories, her friendships, her politics, her prosperity. Very strange to say, instead of being overwhelmed, she felt wonderfully relieved. It was as if a weight of duty was lifted off of her, and a world of artificiality dissipated from around

her. She had now no duty, save the single one of prudence, to provide for the regular wants of life. Those that approached her, could no longer do so with either a selfish design or hypocritical countenance. Instead of flattery, she now experienced devotion. Instead of cold and calculated politeness, she experienced sympathy. Her previous relations had shown her both the mockery of love and friendship. She now saw the latter at least possible. The possession of fortune seemed, in fact, to have burdened her with the severest of duties, and taken from her all the true consolations of life. The consciousness of fortune had pushed her forward to take the initiative in thoughts and things, where women did best to remain passive. She had had dreams of philanthropy, which provoked others' derision and her own. She had made the mistake of seeking a hero in Charles Delmer, whilst had she been poor, she would at least have waited for his homage. The possession of fortune had led to a wild and foolish dance after envied eminence and distinction,—had thrust her into circles of fashion, of which she had neither the jargon, the feelings, the ideas, nor the aims. It had

thus made her the dupe of personal ambition, in dangling before her the prize of a glittering title. All had vanished,—lovers, friends, acquaintances. Even grave politicians, liberal and illiberal, who had fawned upon her as courtiers when they thought her possessed of wealth and influence, turned their backs as upon a marble statue, now she was said to be ruined. Nor was this merely a trick of the aristocracy ; for monied position is worshipped at Manchester far more than at St. James's.

From many whom she would least have suspected of entertaining it, she found the truest friendship. Nor were these confined to the humble class. The whole family of Mertons displayed a friendship and attention, which they had for some time withheld. Mr. Pistrucci, thinking her destitute, imagined a thousand bright and friendly plans. Thaddeus and Rachel embarked for the land of promise with hopes that the wreck of an English property might still prove an ample commencement for an American one. George Pevensey, though he shrunk from intruding on misfortune, and feared to place himself once more in the position of a discarded lover,

still lost no opportunity of throwing himself and whatever he possessed at Naomi's feet. Unknown to her, indeed, he risked all that he did possess, and even more, in meeting legal expenses, and adjourning sacrifices and sales, thus giving time for the righting of her fortune. Naomi turned from any such homage, however, with too marked a repugnance to admit of its repetition.

The catastrophe of Plynlimon had at least one good result ; it left George Pevensey without a dangerous competitor for Shuttlefield. In the general election he carried the day without an effort, whilst Poyntztett was much disappointed on finding that the division of the county was not offered to it. Such, indeed, was the ambiguous position taken by Lord Poyntz, and the determined hostility of the Duke of Armington to the thorough-going Tories, that these directed all their efforts towards humbling their family influence ; and they completely succeeded in putting two Protectionists into Parliament, the promising Lord Poyntz being replaced by a burly farmer, a genuine representative of his class. Miss Worksworth took no part and expressed no opinion, although the expected sale of her

estates had not yet taken place ; but as the contest was a close one, his lordship had some reason to regret his repudiation of even the declining interest of Worksworth. At such a time to be out of Parliament was to be out of the world ; and at no very distant occasion Lord Poyntz felt it.

The middle of the nineteenth century will be remembered as an epoch, for the humiliation of old politicians and the illustration of new. It would seem, indeed, to be the rule in England as well as throughout Europe, that whilst the old aristocracy could no longer put forth an able minister, the new democracy were equally unable to fill the void thus created. Fortune seemed to delight in humiliating great lords. Those of the old Tory stamp, whose sole merit was their unbending consistency and adherence to principle, were brought by a singular concatenation of circumstances to sacrifice their principles, and thus lose their character without maintaining their places. Jacobi would have saved the Tories by larger condescension to the ideas and morals of the age. They would only give him half liberty to try the experiment, and this half was enough to ruin them as Tories, with-

out redeeming them as capable and popular men. Jacobi's budget, though one of the boldest acts of the half century, seemed in the bud but as a suggestion or impulse, and an excuse to his rivals to do something in the same way more mature and more specious. So that even this was bootless ; and Jacobi, though owning he fell with a very bouquet of glorious coruscation, fell not the less entombed for the nonce in the stupidity and impracticability of his party.

The falling of one planet, however, is not always marked by the rising of another ; for in this case triumph to the political victors was but the signal for their joint and mutual humiliation. That great liberal aristocracy, which had left such men as Delmer to rot, and had quenched the rising talent of their party by placing their corpulent and selfish bodies in every chair, were now obliged to take service under the young subordinates of Peel's followers. No doubt the sacrifice was necessary and the policy expedient, for without such apparent self-denial the *capables*, whom Peel had educated for the Tory party, and abstracted from them, would have fallen back into their ancient ranks. Whereas they were

now definitively won by the great Whig party succumbing to them, and adopting their lead, in semblance, at least, if not in reality. For, after all, the Peelites, though first in place, were least in number, and formed but a minority in the cabinet. A dissenting Premier could not wield the patronage of the Church. The colleague of Lord Castlereagh could not control the foreign policy of the country, whilst the first man of the Whigs held its seals. If, again, the Whigs gave up patronage, and shelved so many incapables of their party, they were delighted at having an excuse for escaping from both importunities and appointments. Thus parting with all that was inconvenient, and preserving the reality of power, they were not the party to be so much either blamed or pitied. But with all that, the future prospects and traditional grandeur of the party were sacrificed by its apparent humiliation.

“There are the Whigs,” exclaimed Pevensey, “humbled with the position and confession of being but half a party, and not even the leading half. And they have brought themselves to this, solely by their jealous hatred of popular and eminent men. In

alliance with the politicians of the middle and industrious classes, the Whigs might have survived. They professed to stand alone in their gentility; and the consequence is, their half-effacement in 1853, to be followed by their total effacement in a very few years, unless some leader of theirs know how to touch mother earth, and regenerate a broad, large, industrial, and inclusive party."

"That," said Naomi, "was the dream of Sir Everard Grimstone, who promised poor Charles Delmer to regenerate the Liberal party in one new and glorious mass. What has become of Sir Everard and of his idea? Whoever hears of either one or the other? Was ever an ambitious man so extinguished? A would-be leader even thrust down into the subordinate."

Sir Everard, however, notwithstanding such ill-natured remarks, was perfectly contented. His avarice was satisfied with place, and his jealous nature by having dragged the leading Whigs down to his own level. He was under an eclipse, but it was the fashion for leading men to be so for the nonce.

But the least contented of the whole happy family was Lord Armington, who had looked

to form a party and be at the head of it, and who found himself in place, indeed, but neither at the head nor tail of any party. He saw the absorption by the Whigs, and feared and disliked it. If aught stood in the way of it, it was the financial talent of Gladstone, not the solemn manœuvring and party-joining of Poynstett.

“Amidst this universal discontent, Mr. Pevensey, how feel your own party and yourself? But I should not ask the two questions together; for a party may sink, whilst a prudent member of it rises.”

“The Radicals,” said Pevensey, “ought to be well contented with the progress of their ideas, however little they have reason to be satisfied with their personal influence and advancement. The great revolution, which is to bring land down to a level with other things, certainly makes marked progress. If not yet equal before the Queen’s throne, the two classes are becoming so before the Speaker, and are completely so before the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We need not live long to see the day, when the squires must pay their debts like other people, and when their progeny shall be no more privileged to subsist in

wealth and power, than the inheritors of any other kind of property."

"It will be a great change, that which destroys the tradition and peculiar character of the English gentry."

"They will be far better preserved and more efficaciously defended by making part of a numerous class of the rich and eminent, than ever they could have been by remaining exclusively the most lazy and unintelligent of classes. The Roman patriciate was an aristocracy of moveable wealth and importance, independent of the soil and its entail, and who kept wealth and importance without the monopoly of the eldest son, taking the ablest of the family for its chief, not the eldest."

"But how will this affect or satisfy you middle-class Radicals? You will still have an aristocracy to combat?"

"No doubt. But it is not only the proprietor of land who will be brought to the same level as the proprietor of any other kind of wealth. It is to be hoped the peasant may be assimilated to the artizan, in education, knowledge, independence, quickness: and then there will be in England, what does not exist at present, a people to appeal to."

"I am delighted to hear you talk so hopefully of Old England. It implies hopefulness of yourself, and precludes your old idea of doing what too many people now-a-days meditate, expatriation to America."

"Yet," said Pevensey, "I do not see why I should give up that idea. The political progress that I see and foresee, is achieved and likely to be achieved by the old faction of politics, by Whig and Tory, or by the hybrid people between them. No one of the popular party has a chance of making use of politics as a profession. The English aristocracy itself will be dethroned, before the old agents abandon their prescriptive hold upon office. But, indeed, I am far from envying them the monopoly. It is a feverish, an unsatisfactory, a disappointing life. It is much higher, nobler, and more desirable to influence politics from a private or industrial position of eminence and wealth, than to be the actual political agent or minister who must obey their influence."

"You prefer, then, the eminence and influence which wealth gives, to that which genius bestows."

"I am afraid," said Pevensey, "that is even so."

"It is the first time," said Naomi, "that I have been shown cause to regret my loss of fortune."

"I am in great hopes, Naomi," said George Pevensey, "that it is not all gone."

"Of wherewithal to live I shall be glad, but what should I, a woman, do with more?"

"That must be left to woman's true instinct."

"Of what use speculating on rare contingencies! The Liverpool obligations of Plylimon would swallow any fortune."

"They were clearly electioneering bubbles, mere gambling, and might be resisted on that ground."

"It would be dishonourable avoidance of responsibility. If he was my representative at times, I am bound by him."

"Yet every court and every judge is so prone to defeat his villainy, and the villainy of those who have gained by his, that the smallest document, disproving his being your agent, and himself to be acting for you at the time, would suffice to set you free."

"There can be none such. Mr. Plynlimon was not the man to state any such thing under his hand."

"You should have allowed me to write to Mrs. Delmer, whether any scrap from Plynlimon, or allusion to him, could be found in the papers of her lamented son."

"I would not for the world have stirred her grief, by the search after so vain a trifle."

"I have written to Mr. Jacobi, nevertheless, urging him to see into it."

"He is far too busy with much more important things."

"When he was full of business, he took a most anxious interest in the villanous traitor who caused your ruin."

Pevensey was so far right, that Jacobi spared none of the pains asked of him, and he was the more able to take them, as the entire of poor Charles Delmer's papers had been handed over to him, for the selection of what was good to destroy, what fit to be preserved, or perhaps published. A testamentary record of Delmer's had ordered this.

It therefore happened, that Jacobi was able to transmit to Pevensey a note, written

and signed by Mr. Plynlimon, in answer to some demand or reproach of Delmer's, with respect to his election. In the note, Mr. Plynlimon not only denied the charge of influencing any county election against Charles Delmer's interest, but declared in express terms that he was no longer Miss Worksworth's agent or representative at either Worksworth or Shuttlefield. It was only as her representative and manager in these places, that Plynlimon could have made the large and unusual purchases of cotton, which formed the principal claim of Naomi's present creditors at Liverpool. Pevensey, therefore, considered the document as a very important one, and as such reserved it for the day of trial. As nothing of the kind had been previously produced, an omission naturally accounted for, it produced no little sensation in court, and amongst those immediately interested. The more important result was, however, a verdict which, in a year-and-a-half after Plynlimon's catastrophe, liberated Naomi from the most overwhelming portion of the Plynlimon defalcations.

When, therefore, the demands of the depositors in the Savings' Banks had been satisfied,

and most of Plynlimon's liabilities, as could not honourably be escaped, were paid, Naomi Worksworth found herself, after all, mistress of as large a fortune as she would herself have chosen to possess, had the amount been in her power to fix. It gave ample command of all the luxuries of life, including the moral luxury of beneficence, and that still greater one, of not being necessitated daily to sacrifice to parsimony, and be haunted by fear. But the extent of possession, that gave political influence, the mass of employed capital, which gave power over multitudes, and entrusted the responsibility of caring for their minds, and bodies, and progeny, all this was taken from her. She had not merely competence, but affluence; it was the affluence, however, of the individual, not of authority or rank. She felt the delight of one who, having been accustomed to walk on stilts above the world's crowd, looked up to, and looking down upon, elevated by anxieties and motives different to her fellows, was by some accident let down to walk with the rest of mankind, shorn of pride and its gratifications, but gifted in return with scores of sympathies and enjoyments unknown before.

The first question she seriously asked herself, after that of her fortune was definitively settled, was, whether she should reward the evident saviour of her fortune, Pevensey, by giving him that which he sought, her hand. Gratitude pleaded for him ; so did prudence, *convenance*, and an hundred excellent reasons, besides the high and noble character, as well as in the firm and sincere attachment of Pevensey himself. But she felt no love for her old playmate, however infinite her gratitude and respect. Love, indeed, she had never felt. Her fortune and position had stifled such a sentiment. She had worshipped a political and intellectual hero in Charles Delmer. She had prostrated herself before a title, as Lord Poyntz. She was thoroughly mortified and ashamed of herself for having made two such mistakes. She mistrusted her reason and calculation in this matter, and feared, that a marriage of gratitude and prudence might turn out another disappointment. Besides, she abhorred politics, whilst Pevensey was only worshipable as a public man. His public career, too, must necessarily be that of a stern, rude, popular champion. And of the

few things she had gathered from her experience of life, fastidiousness was one. However much she despised the emptiness of rank and fashion, still certain qualities appertaining to them, a certain air, and a certain sentiment, were so requisite to what she could love, that whilst she hated the selfishness and emptiness of the men of the world, she would have liked the gloss without the hard substance, upon which alone perhaps it could shine to perfection.

Pevensey was once more fully, however delicately, informed of her determination, which, far from astonishing him, seemed natural. After so many disappointments, after hope put forth in many ways, and blighted, Pevensey was prepared to find Naomi resolved to live in suspense for a time, if not in misanthropy. He therefore acquiesced, appealed for the present to the future, and would by no means consider his rejection as so final as Naomi certainly considered it.

Meantime, that lady, although she had lost and forsworn the poetry of life, was not prepared to bid at the same time farewell to so much that was pleasant in its prose. Far from

turning her back upon society and friendship, she looked to both to fill the void, which youth and imagination would have lit up with warmer sentiments. She did not think London barren, because the *cœlicolæ* would look down upon her, nor Paris unenjoyable, because the worthless few, who lived in a by-gone world, and imitated its illusion and its jargon, in vain hope of renewing the realities of the *ancien régime*, might not stoop to welcome less than a female millionaire. A woman, mistress of a good fortune, of a whole heart, of years sufficient, but not too many; of experience and knowledge enough of the world neither to shun nor to adore it, but to choose the goods of it, and enjoy them, is perhaps in as fair a condition of happiness as can be imagined. Novelists will not have it so; and novelists, no doubt, consult the sentiments of the world for which they write; but I must beg to differ with them for the present, and leave my heroine as the world left, and nature made her. Let those who have been admitted to her mansion and society say, whether, after all, she has made a bad choice, and whether life, having failed of its primary romance, is not better spent by

not attempting the secondary. The intellect of the day frequented it. Fashion, though at first resentful, did not scorn it. Politicians, though not received as such, were glad to mingle in its society. Nor did the eminent, and the sanguine man of humble life, find the door closed against him, because he courted popular favour, and was stigmatized as a Radical.

THE END.











